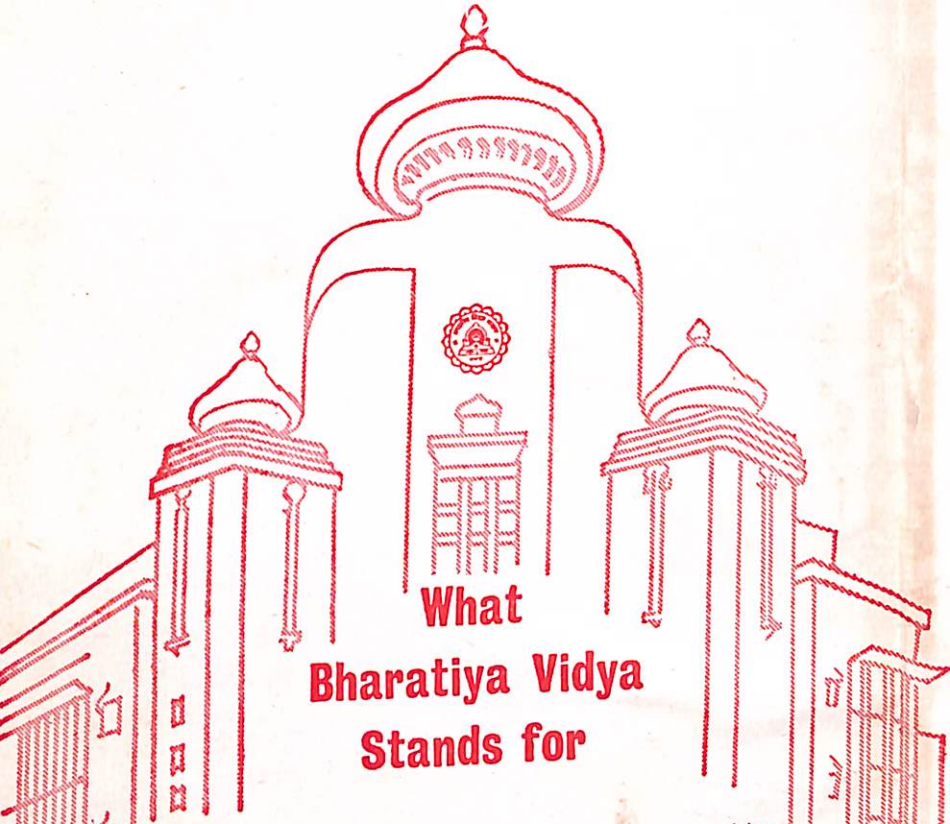
BHAVAN'S BOOK UNIVERSITY

A PHILOSOPHER LOOKS BACK

T. M. P. MAHADEVAN

BHARATIYA VIDYA BHAVAN, BOMBAY-400 007



What Bharatiya Vidya Stands for

Bharatiya Shiksha must ensure that no promising young Indian of character having faith in Bharat and her culture Bharatiya Vidya should be left without modern educational equipment by reason merely of want of funds.

2, Bharatiya Shiksha must be formative more than informative, and cannot have for its end mere acquisition of knowledge. Its legitimate sphere is not only to develop natural talents but so to shape them as to enable them to absorb and express the permanent values of Bharatiya Vidya.

3. Bharatiya Shiksha must take into account not only the full growth of a student's personality but the totality of his relations and lead him to the highest self-fulfilment of which he is capable.

4. Bharatiya Shiksha must involve at some stage or other an intensive study of Sanskrit or Sanskritic languages and their literature, without excluding, if so desired, the study of other languages and literature, ancient and modern.

5. The re-integration of Bharatiya Vidya, which is the primary object of Bharatiya Shiksha, can only be attained through a study of forces, movements, motives, ideas, forms and art of creative life-energy through which it has expressed itself in different ages as a single continuous process.

6. Bharatiya Shiksha must stimulate the student's power of expression, both written and oral, at every stage in accordance with the highest ideals attained by the great literary masters in the intellectual and moral spheres.

7. The technique of Bharatiya Shiksha must involve—

(a) the adoption by the teacher of the *Guru* attitude which consists in taking a personal interest in the student; inspiring and encouraging him to achieve distinction in his studies; entering into his life with a view to form ideals and remove psychological obstacles; and creating in him a spirit of consecration; and

(b) the adoption by the student of the *Sishya* attitude by the development of—

(i) respect for the teacher,

(ii) a spirit of inquiry,

(iii) a spirit of service towards the teacher, the institution, Bharat and Bharatiya Vidya.

8. The ultimate aim of Bharatiya Shiksha is to teach the younger generation to appreciate and live up to the permanent values of Bharatiya Vidya which is flowing from the supreme art of creative life-energy as represented by Shri Ramachandra, Shri Krishna, Vyasa, Buddha and Mahavira have expressed themselves in modern times in the life of Shri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, Swami Dayananda Saraswati, and Swami Vivekananda, Shri Aurobindo and Mahatma Gandhi.

9. Bharatiya Shiksha while equipping the student with every kind of scientific and technical training must teach the student, not to sacrifice an ancient form or attitude to an unreasoning passion for change; not to retain a form or attitude which in the light of modern times can be replaced by another form of attitude which is a truer and more effective expression of the spirit of Bharatiya Vidya; and to capture the spirit afresh for each generation to present it to the world.

आ नो भद्राः क्रतवो यन्तु विश्वतः।

Let noble thoughts come to us from every side

—Rigveda, 1-89-i

BHAVAN'S BOOK UNIVERSITY

General Editors

R. R. DIWAKAR

S. RAMAKRISHNAN

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By

T. M. P. MAHADEVAN

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1982

BHARATIYA VIDYA BHAVAN

Kulapati K. M. Munshi Marg

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KULAPATI'S PREFACE

THE Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan—that Institute of Indian Culture in Bombay—needed a Book University, a series of books which, if red, would serve the purpose of providing higher education. Particular emphasis, however, was to be put on such literature as revealed the deeper impulsions of India. As a first step, it was decided to bring out in English 100 books, 50 of which were to be taken in hand almost at once.

It is our intention to publish the books we select, not only in English, but also in the following Indian languages : Hindi, Bengali, Gujarati, Marathi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam.

This scheme involving the publication of 900 volumes, requires ample funds and an all-India organisation. The Bhavan is exerting itself to the utmost to supply them.

The objectives for which the Bhavan stands are the reintegration of Indian culture in the light of modern knowledge and to suit our present-day needs and the resuscitation of its fundamental values in their pristine vigour.

Let me make our goal more explicit :

We seek the dignity of man, which necessarily implies the creation of social conditions that allow him freedom to evolve along the lines of his own temperament and capacities ; we seek the harmony of individual efforts and social relations, not in any makeshift way, but within the frame-work

of the Moral Order ; we seek the creative art of life, by the alchemy of which human limitations are progressively transmuted, so that man may become the instrument of God, and is able to see Him in all and all in Him.

The world, we feel, is too much with us. Nothing would uplift or inspire us so much as the beauty and aspiration which such books can teach.

In this series, therefore, the literature of India, ancient and modern, will be published in a form easily accessible to all. Books in other literatures of the world, if they illustrate the principles we stand for, will also be included.

This common pool of literature, it is hoped, will enable the reader, eastern or western, to understand and appreciate currents of world thought, as also the movements of the Indian mind, which, though they flow through different linguistic channels, have a common urge and aspiration.

Fittingly, the Book University's first venture is the *Mahabharata*, summarised by one of the greatest living Indians, C. Rajagopalachari ; the second work is on a section of it, the *Gita*, by H. V. Divatia, an eminent jurist and a student of philosophy. Centuries ago, it was proclaimed of the *Mahabharata* : ' What is not in it, is nowhere. ' After twenty-five centuries, we can use the same words about it. He who knows it not, knows not the heights and depths of the soul ; he misses the trials and tragedy and the beauty and grandeur of life.

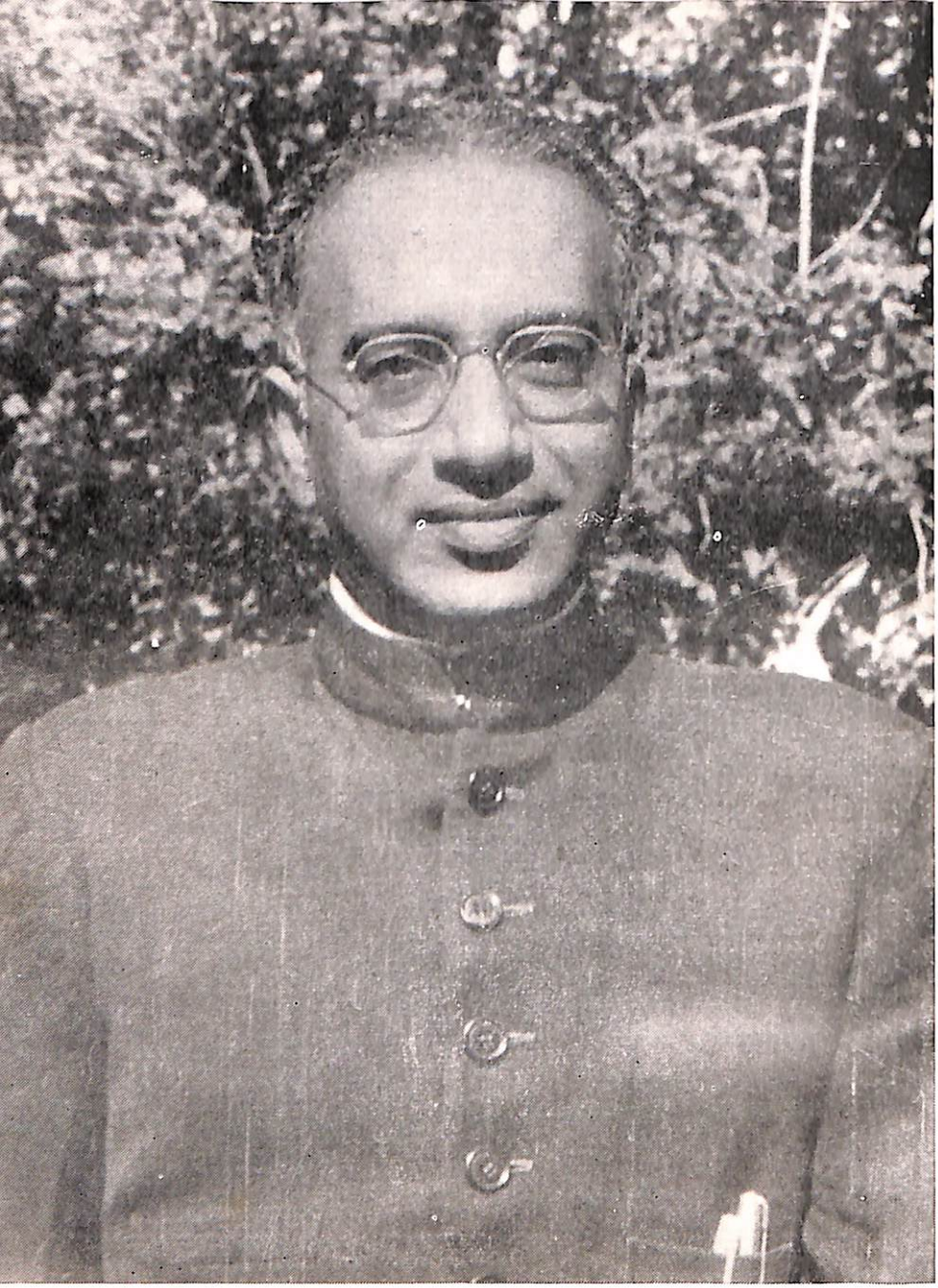
The *Mahabharata* is not a mere epic ; it is a romance telling the tale of heroic men and women and some who were divine ; it is a whole literature in itself, containing a code of life, a philosophy of social and ethical relations, and

speculative thought on human problems that is hard to rival ; but, above all, it has for its core the *Gita*, which is, as the world is beginning to find out, the noblest of scriptures and the grandest of sagas in which the climax is reached in the wondrous Apocalypse in the Eleventh Canto.

Through such books alone, the harmonies, underlying true culture, I am convinced, will one day reconcile the disorders of modern life.

I thank all those who have helped to make this new branch of the Bhavan's activity successful.

K. M. MUNSHI



Professor T. M. P. Mahadevan, Professor Emeritus, University of Madras

śaṅkaram rāmakṛṣṇam ca
ramaṇam candraśekharam
namāmi manasā vācā
kāyena ca muhur muhuḥ

With mind, speech, and body I salute again and again Śaṅkara, Rāmakṛṣṇa, Ramaṇa and Candraśekhara.

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PREFACE

The term ' Philosopher ' in the title of the book is used in its etymological sense : ' Lover of Wisdom '. Wisdom is the direct knowledge of the Truth. And, the Truth is the Self. Mahātmā Gandhi has said that he had started defining God as Truth and then after deep contemplation he had to reverse the statement and say ' Truth is God '. The reason he gave was that while there might be deniers of God there could not be deniers of Truth. Ācārya Śaṅkara in a well-known context in his *Brahma-sūtra-bhāṣya* observes that no one can deny the Self because it is of the very nature of him who denies. It is as a seeker of the Self that I have all along attempted to shape my life. In this attempt I have been receiving abundant grace and guidance from sages and saints. The only aim of writing this story is to share my experiences in this regard with fellow-pilgrims to the Land of the Self. I shall feel my effort worth-while if it will help at least some aspirants in their quest for Truth.

I am grateful to Sri S. Ramakrishnan, Secretary, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, who without any hesitation accepted to publish this autobiography in the Bhavan's series.

1

'I' Was Not Born

The 'segment' of consciousness (*cidābhāsa*) which had appropriated this body made it see the light of day and touch the hard surface of the earth, after making it spend ten months in the prison-house of its mother's womb, on the 24th of August, 1911. It is one of those mysteries how a child springs to consciousness and is born to live its allotted life. A great philosopher of the fourteenth century A.D. enumerates some instances of inexplicable happenings. One of them is stated by him thus : 'The semen in the womb springs to consciousness; it is invested with various limbs; it passes through the stages of infancy, youth, old age etc., it eats, drinks, speaks, smells, hears and moves. Can there be a greater miracle than this?' Empirical science with all its ever-increasing facilities for accurate observation, gives us a description of phenomena with precision and minuteness ; but seldom is it able to discern *how* they happen. And, surely the question *why* is beyond its reach. Child-birth as a phenomenon, falls under this category. Mystery surrounds it in spite of the expanding frontiers of human knowledge.

When a child is born it is enveloped in ignorance. That

is why the *Bhagavad-gītā* gives as an example the envelopment of the foetus by the womb (111, 38). Although ignorance is there, inherited from the past, the child remains for a period of time without being affected by the 'I-thou' dichotomy. It sees all as one, without being able to make distinctions in it. Divisions and diversities which constantly draw the attention of the adult carry no meaning to the child. It does not even make any difference between the living and the non-living, between the inert and the intelligent, between the moving and the non-moving. This is because although the body has been born, there has not taken place the birth of the 'I' in it. That is why a well-known English poet says in one of his poems, 'Heaven lies about us in our infancy'. As the child grows, it gradually loses glimpse of this heaven. It is at this point that I should like to commence relating the story of my life.

At the outset I may say that the river of my life has been flowing for the last seventy years smoothly and on an even course, without turbulence or turmoil; hardly has there been any storm swaying its waters, or strong current or whirlpool waiting for victims. This is because, I am convinced, it has had as its guardian-angel the Grace Divine. What I am going to say here in this book may not mean much to the adventurer or the hunter for sensations. The only purpose of wanting to share my experiences with the reader is to be of some help to the fellow-pilgrim who has similar aspirations and objectives.

I was born in a middle-class family which owned a modest house in the middle part of the City of Madras about a mile inland from the sea-coast. The family should have migrated earlier from a village not far from the city and settled down in this area. The family consisted of, when I knew it, the maternal Grandfather, his three daughters and a son. Two of his daughters had already become widows.

The eldest had two sons and the next one was a virgin widow, the third daughter was my Mother. The usual custom among the Hindus is that a married girl goes to the home of her husband and lives with his family. But in this case it so happened that the bridegroom came to live with the family of the bride. The house in which the family lived was divided into three apartments, one behind the other. In the third apartment lived the eldest daughter with her children. The others lived with the *Paterfamilias*, who was already a widower, with the other members of the family. I have already given the date of my birth according to the European calendar. According to the Indian calendar the birth took place in the year Virodhikṛt, month Āvaṇi, on the new moon day which was a Thursday, at 10-30 a.m. I have vague memories of my Mother. The Father who was living in the house had set up some business. I remember my Mother feeding me as most Indian mothers do, pointing out to the moon and asking it to come with sweet smelling jasmine flowers and share the food. There was a pial-school next to our house. When I was about three years old, I was sent there to learn the Tamil Alphabet and simple arithmetic. In those days the teacher (they were all single-teacher private schools) used to administer to every one of the children a stroke with the cane on the open palm of the right hand when he sent them home for lunch. This was supposed to be for making them study well. I was always afraid of corporal punishment ; I used to go crying and report to my Mother and she used to console me. The Mother's life was short. But I have heard many neighbours say that they had never seen her go out of the house —even to the temple. After her household duties, she used to spend all her spare time in the domestic shrine-room. She gave birth to another child, a girl, but after a few days it passed away. The Mother did not feel sorry, there was

neither weeping nor wailing; she just remarked, 'God gave it to me and He has taken it away'. She must have fallen ill thereafter. The end came in 1916. This is what I have heard the elders in the family say about her death. One morning that year she sat up facing the East. She called her Father, who had some knowledge of the deeper values of life, and told him, 'Please look over there in the sky (there was a courtyard open to the sky in front of the hall where she was lying); I see seated on the sacred Bull Pārvatī and Parameśvara surrounded by a blazing light'. The Father asked her, 'You see the light, but have you drunk the nectar coming out of it?' She replied, 'Oh yes, certainly'. Then immediately afterwards she lay down with her folded hands for pillow and passed away. I did not know what was happening; but before she passed away she called her immediately elder sister, took my hands and placed them in hers and told her, 'I am leaving this child in your charge'. I was then taken away and brought again to look at the Mother who was now lying on her back. It appeared as if she was asleep. What I still remember is her fair face with a large round *kumkum* on her forehead. Early that morning her brother had left for a holy place dedicated to Lord Subrahmaṇya, as that was a day specially sacred for that Deity. As soon as Mother died a message was sent to him and the entire family was waiting for his return before the body could be taken out to the cremation-ground. The holy place is not at any great distance from Madras. Now, there is road-communication. It would only take an hour to reach the place. But at that time one had to travel by country-boat part of the distance and do the rest of the journey by bullock-cart. As the uncle could not return in the time and the shades had begun to fall, Mother's body was taken out for the last journey. Someone who was holding me at that time handed me over to the

arms of the Grandfather. The last look that I had of Mother's face was when the body was being taken out and the journey had begun. Very soon after, the uncle came back in great agony, weeping and crying ; he ran to catch up with the procession and succeeded in joining it.

The eldest aunt used to relate to friends who called at the house, a dream which she often saw in which my Mother appeared in a luminous mode and asking her not to approach or touch her and saying 'I have just come to see how my son is getting on'. Many other similar experiences she must have obviously shared with her friends, but I do not remember them.

Sometime after Mother's death, my Father left the household, went back to his people and eventually he set up a family. He used to come and see me occasionally till he passed away many decades later. But the parting of the ways happened, as I have already stated, soon after Mother's death.

2

Induction into Spiritual Life

The aunt in whose care I was placed by my Mother did everything possible to discharge her special trust. She had a great leaning toward spiritual life. She would go and listen to discourses on spiritual themes, visit temples and go and see holy men if she came to hear about them. At that time there was a saint, Śrī Karapātra Śivaprakāśa Svāmī, at Vyāsarpāḍi near Madras. Earlier, the saint had stayed for a number of years in a garden at Vepery. Later on what came to be called Ānanda Āśrama was built at Vyāsarpāḍi, and the Svāmī moved to that place, making it his residence. Many devotees went to him and listened to his teachings which were on Vedānta. He was responsible for collecting and publishing selections from several Vedāntic works, (some of them Tamil translations from Sanskrit) under the title *Vedānta-manana-cintāmaṇi*. This was first published in 1911. My aunt used to go to Vyāsarpāḍi to see the Svāmī and listen to his talks. Sometimes she took me with her. On the fullmoon day in the month of Citra the devotees used to perform ceremonial *abhiṣeka* to the Svāmī. I still remember witnessing one such *abhiṣeka*. The Svāmī sat on a *pīṭha* in *padmāsana* (lotus-pose), the devotees performed

the *abhiṣeka* with one item after another such as milk, curd, sandal-paste, mashed fruit, *vibhūti* etc. This took nearly three to four hours. The Svāmī was lost in *sāmādhi* and he regained outer consciousness after the whole *pūjā* was over. He passed away in 1918. When the news reached our house, my aunt along with some other members of the family started for Vyāsarpāḍi, but they would not take me with them because I was small and the distance was great.

Inspired by the experience of non-duality of this saint a *pīṭhādhipati* of an Advaita maṭh in the South came and settled down in Madras in a branch Ānandāśrama opened in Vepery. Vīraśekhara Subbaiah Svāmigal was a scholar both in Sanskrit and in Tamil. He translated several Sanksrit works into Tamil verse including *Ātma-purāṇam*, *Jñāna-vāsiṣṭham* etc. I had the privilege of knowing this Svāmī intimately later on.

1914 and 1918 were the years of the First World-War whose repercussions were felt even in distant Madras. An event which I remember even now and which was the talk of the town then was the bomb thrown at the Madras Coast from the German warship Emden. I was reminded of this many years later after my return from the United States in 1949. A professor of philosophy, Dr. Schilpp, who is the well-known editor of a series of volumes on Living Philosophers, whom I met in America, visited Madras soon after my return accompanied by his wife. They are of German origin and were eager to locate the spot where the bomb fell. I took them on a mission of exploration. They gave me details about the probable place from what they had heard about it. We went to the outside of the low compound wall skirting the High Court building where the Lighthouse was also located then. On the Eastern side of the wall they dug some earth and we discovered the place on which there is the inscription that the bomb hit that spot.

Our family owned some agricultural land in a village between Madras and Tiruppōrūr which is the name of the place where the Subrahmaṇya shrine referred to already is located. The person who actually cultivated the land used to bring the family share of the produce once a year. My aunt wanted to augment the income of the family, especially as I had to be brought up by her. She bought a few cows and fortunately a young milk-man was appointed to look after them. The excess milk was sold to friends and neighbours. Coming to know that there was a Svāmī living nearby she went and saw him and offered to supply milk for his use. One day soon thereafter she took me along with her to meet the Svāmī. The street on which he was living in the room of a house, ran perpendicular to ours. It was a fairly long room in the front portion of an old house. As I entered the door of the room I saw a large picture of Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa Paramahaṁsa installed on an altar. I saw the Svāmī seated in the room and was introduced to him by my aunt. He called himself Satchidānanda and in 1919 he founded an association, Satchidānanda Saṅgha. I gathered a few details about him from my aunt and others as well. He belonged to a family of North Indians settled in Madras. His mother tongue was Hindi. He studied in the Hindu High School, Triplicane. In those days English was considered to be the first language and an Indian language, usually the mother tongue, to be the second language. As there was no provision for Hindi in most of the schools then, the non-Tamil students chose Telugu. The Svāmī as a student had taken Telugu as his second language. He had lost his parents and also what little property there was, for some reason or other. He had a widowed sister with children. That family was living in the opposite house. As he had to support them, he was employed in the Public Works Department building, I think,

as a telephone-operator. His heart was towards renunciation, but he had obligations in regard to his sister and her family. I used to observe him going to his office with an ochre-coloured cloth tied around his waist and an English type of jacket over his body. He had assumed the *sannyāsa* name himself and was greatly influenced by reading the lectures of Svāmī Vivekānanda. That must have been responsible for founding the Saṅgha. After his sister with her family left for Bombay as her eldest daughter was married there, the Svāmī resigned his job and concentrated on the work of the society with the help of some of his erstwhile schoolmates. He used to go to the Rāmakṛṣṇa Maṭh in Mylapore. The then President of the Maṭh, Svāmī Śarvānanda, who had a towering personality, with a perfect command of English and great oratorical powers, took a liking for him and he agreed to give talks on Sunday mornings in the locality where the Saṅgha was situated. There is a building in that locality called *Anna-dāna-samājam* which was intended for feeding the poor. It has a big hall. The Svāmī engaged this hall for the Sunday meetings. He used to borrow the coach belonging to a rich North Indian living in Madras, take it to the Maṭh in Mylapore, bring Svāmī Śarvānanda for the Sunday discourse and afterwards take him back. I used to accompany him on most of the Sundays. Svāmī Satchidānanda made me recite invocatory verses in Sanskrit before the discourse began. On those occasions the publications of the Maṭh and pictures of Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa, the Holy Mother and Svāmī Vivekānanda used to be displayed and sold to those who wanted to buy them. Under the auspices of the Saṅgha periodical conferences of world faiths were also arranged by the Svāmī, with Svāmī Śarvānanda presiding over them. Several decades later, during one of my visits to the Belur Maṭh, the Headquarters of the Rāmakṛṣṇa Mission, near Calcutta, I saw Svāmī Śarvānanda there. He had

become very old by then and was also ailing. As soon as he saw me, he exclaimed 'Ah, you are Mahadevan who used to chant invocatory verses in such a ringing voice in those days'. Starting from 1919 the Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa Jayanti was celebrated every year with great eclat with a procession of the portrait of Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa preceded by music and followed by *bhajan*-parties etc.

3

Primary Education

I was admitted to a formal school in 1919 in Standard 3. It was a Wesleyan Mission School in Triplicane, the Kellet High School. The primary stage consisted of five standards, as it continues to be so even now. I studied in that school for three years, from 1919 to 1922, in standards 3, 4, and 5. Although it was a mission school all my teachers were fond of me and very considerate towards me. As regards studies I had no difficulty, but I was poor on the play-field. Fortunately for me the teacher who was the drill-master was also in charge of the Bible-class and drawing. He was also a musician who could play on the violin. He had special affection for me because I used to score one-hundred per cent in the Bible-examinations and could draw very well. I was good at clay-modelling also. I remember that once I did a small statue of Hunumān. The school wanted to keep it in the glass-cupboard containing art-objects. The drill-master frequently used to ask me to sing songs from the *Tiruppugaḻ* and as I sang he would accompany on the violin.

The medium of instruction, even in primary shool was English. The Principal of the School who was British

came to handle the English classes. He used to bring a box full of objects for demonstration, toys etc.

One evening in 1919 as the school was about to close for the day my aunt came and asked me to follow her to the Triplicane Beach. She told me that Mahātmā Gandhi was to address a mammoth meeting that evening. I learnt later that the meeting was in connection with the Khilafat movement. As we reached the beach we found a huge gathering. The place was next to the Aquarium. Later it came to be called Tilak-ghāt. There was a raised platform, Gandhi was dressed in a kurta, dhoti, and what became famous later on as the Gandhi-cap. He was flanked by the Ali brothers, Maulana Mohamed Ali and Maulana Shaukat Ali. Gandhiji spoke to the gathering explaining the significance of the Movement. What impressed me was this : At sundown the Muslim section of the audience rose and moved to an adjoining place and offered the evening prayers. Tilak-ghāt became from then on the place for nationalist meetings. It has seen many national leaders speaking most passionately on the significance of the struggle for independence. When I grew up I used to attend these meetings which normally began with patriotic songs rendered by young people in full-throated voice. This was followed by addresses by political leaders. Many a time there were attempts made by the police to disperse the gathering with lathi charge and sometimes even by resorting to firing.

The distance from my house to the school was more than a mile. Most of the days I used to walk to and fro. Some times I travelled by tram-car which I could catch after walking for two furlongs. One day, I tried to board a running tram-car. In those days the footboard ran throughout the length of the car and the seats were arranged one behind the other with the sides open. As I stepped onto the foot-board, I failed to catch the handle and so fell off to the

ground. Fortunately nothing serious happened and I escaped with minor bruises. This revealed to me that the spirit of adventure was foreign to me and that I had very little technical skill. Years later I learnt bicycle-riding. My friends were worried that I took an abnormally long time to learn how to balance and ride. I had many falls while learning and little wounds were there every time. Still later a sturdy school-mate of mine who had a motor-cycle wanted to teach me how to ride it. After explaining the various details he put me onto the seat of the motor-bicycle and started the engine and let me go. After going some distance I stopped. The bike was so heavy that I could reach the floor with one leg with the machine slanting on that side. The result was that the heated engine burnt into the inside flesh of that foreleg. Almost a decade or two later a yogī who was with us and was very good in driving and repairing automobiles desired to teach me car-driving. He took me several times to the island grounds and made me drive the car sitting by my side. But co-ordinating the changing of the gears, applying brakes when necessary, pressing the accelerator and pressing and releasing the clutch, and handling the steering-wheel was too much for me. And so, the Svāmī gave me up as hopeless. These I have narrated here only to show my limitations.

4

The Rāmakrsna Mission Students' Home

In 1922 I joined the Rāmakṛṣṇa Mission Students' Home, Mylapore, through the efforts of Svāmī Satchidānanda and the help of Svāmī Śarvānanda. The Home had been founded a few years earlier by two cousins under the inspiration of Śrīmat Svāmī Rāmakṛṣṇānandaji Maharāj, a direct disciple of Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa Paramahaṁsa. He had been sent to the South by Svāmī Vivekānanda. From small beginnings he developed the Maṭh, securing the necessary grounds and putting up a spacious building. The cousins mentioned above were Sri C. Ramaswami Aiyangar and Sri C. Ramanujacharya fondly referred to as Ramu and Ramanuju. It was in the year in which I joined the Home that the Residential High School was started. The High School consisted of classes from form one to six. I was admitted in form one and moved up through the other forms till I completed the S.S.L.C. in form six. The classes had small numbers of pupils, about ten to fifteen. We sat on square mats with a desk in front of each of us. The teachers were able to pay individual attention and all of us felt that we were members of a single large family.

Sri Rāmaswami Aiyangar dedicated his life entirely to

the progress of the Home. Although he was employed in the Southern Railway as an officer, he lived in the Home, while his family dwelt in his house near the Kapālīśvara Temple. He used to take for the entire students religion-class every morning at five o' clock. He did the *Śivānanda-laharī* and thereafter the *Yāmunāyastotram*. It will be seen from his selection of texts that he had no bigotry at all nor narrow cultism. Sri C. Ramanujachari was employed as Deputy Secretary in the Madras Secretariat. Every morning on the way to his office he used to come to the Home. He organised a dramatic troup called the Secretariat Party. They put on boards several plays all over South India and donated the proceeds to the Home and as a consequence built up a sizeable endowment. On Sunday mornings the members of the party used to have rehearsals in a building on the campus. Some of us loved to witness these rehearsals. Sri Rāmaswami Aiyangar was very affectionate to me and if there was some special dish or sweets served to him he used to ask me to go to him and partake of the delicacies.

I had never a sturdy or strong constitution. I was frail and under-weight. I remember two of the older inmates of the Home then studying at College using me as a ball, each throwing me into the hands of the other. One of the friends was the late Dr. T. R. Seshadri who served as the Professor of Chemistry at the University of Delhi, and was the recipient of many national and international awards. Because of my light weight he used to call me 'Cotton'. I avoided the play-field as far as possibe and would be found by friends very often on the terrace of the building sitting in meditation.

One of the teachers who helped a small circle of students in our spiritual pursuits was Sri Anna M. Subrahmanya Iyer. He used to teach us the *Bhagavad-gītā*. We observed a fast with him on Ekādaśī days. He was an old student

of the Home and was at the time the Mathematics Assistant in the School.

A beautiful marble statue of Goddess Sarasvatī was set up and consecrated in the shrine of the Home. Anna usually performed the *pūjā* every evening and it was a unique experience to watch him say his devotion on behalf of all of us. On festive occasions he used to take us to the Kapāliśvara Temple in Mylapore and the Pārthasārathi Temple in Triplicane. We would recite on the way each time either the *Bhagavad-gītā* or the *Viṣṇu-sahasranāma.*

One year, quite early, during my stay in the Home there was held a *Gītā* recitation competition in the Madras Sanskrit College. I was persuaded to participate in the competition. There were many candidates. The judges decided to award the first prize to me. From the next year onwards the competition was held annually in the Home itself. Even then I won the first prize. After some years I discontinued competing in this contest. The Sanskrit Paṇḍit had a great liking for me. Whenever there was a public function in the Home he used to ask another school-mate and me to recite invocatory verses.

Sri C. Ramaswami Aiyangar, when he was engaged in performing a religious ceremony one day in his house, had a stroke and had to stay in bed for several months. A classmate of mine and I used to go to his house early morning everyday and recite the *Yāmunāya-stotram* and the *Viṣṇu-sahasranāma.* When he had recovered somewhat, he was brought to the Home and there he stayed until the end came.

I must relate a significant episode or two before I proceed further. One day the students of our class were taken on an excursion by the class-teacher. After alighting from the bus we had to walk quite a distance in the hot sun. Noticing that I was finding it difficult and was lagging behind, the teacher came to me, took me on his shoulders and carried

me till we reached our destination. This act of motherly affection made an indelible impression on my mind. Whenever I think of it I feel elated. The other episode happened many years later. A Zamindar friend who was a schoolmate of mine asked me to take him and his family to His Holiness Śrī Jagadguru Candrasékharendra Sarasvatī, Śrī Śaṅkarācārya of Kāñcī Kāmakoṭi Pīṭham who was camping at a place called Amalāpuram in Andhra Pradesh. We left Madras in the morning by car and it was late in the evening when we reached the place. We rested that night and early morning the next day went to see His Holiness. He was seated in the *menā* (palanquin). Seeing me, His Holiness said, 'Mahādeva, come'. He called me uttering my name with such tenderness and affection as cannot be expected even from a mother. These words filled my heart with joy and ecstasy which I can never forget. Then in the course of the conversation which my friend had with His Holiness he told him, 'In our school days we used to tease Mahadevan as one who did not know the ways of the world and was too innocent'. His Holiness immediately added, 'Even now he is so'.

I have already stated that the High School in those days consisted of six classes called forms. The first three constituted the Lower Secondary and the other three the Higher Secondary. When a student completed the Lower Secondary and entered form four, he had to choose some optional subjects. The optional subjects were specialised courses and they were called C-group subjects. The non-optional subjects were A-group subjects. The student had to choose two optional subjects. They were paired according to certain principles. I had a natural inclination for mathematics and great liking for Sanskrit. But unfortunately these two could not be chosen together. Sri Anna N. Subrahmanya Aiyar wanted me to choose Mathematics, but the

Sanskrit Paṇḍit insisted that I should take Sanskrit. Eventually I opted for Sanskrit with History. I have mentioned this in order to show how chance made me fall in love with this perfected language which is justly called Saṁskṛta.

The main building of the Home was opened in May 1921, by Svāmī Brahmānandaji Mahārāj, the First President of the Rāmakṛṣṇa Order. Śrī Svāmī Śivānandaji Mahārāj, accompanied him to Madras. I knew of this great event. Svāmī Satchidānanda went to Mylapore to have *darśan* of the two great disciples of Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa, as I was thought, perhaps, to be too young then, I was not taken to Mylapore. But the very next year, in 1922, as I have mentioned earlier, I joined the Home sanctified by the two Great Ones.

1924 was a year of supreme significance in my life. In that year Pūjya Śrī Svāmī Śivānandaji Mahārāj (known as Mahāpurush in the Rāmakṛṣṇa circles), had by now become the second President of the Order and he came again on a visit to Madras. When he visited the Home one day, all of us students of the Home, received his benign blessings. Even though I was too young, I could sense the atmosphere of holiness. Śrī Mahāpurushaji Mahārāj was the very picture of saintliness, his serene and calm countenance reflected the pure and plenary spirituality of the Great Master. His gracious look was full of tenderness, in his presence one felt elevated automatically to a lofty plane of existence. It was an intimate and intensely felt experience whose grandeur I can recall in but very inadequate words.

Soon after Śrī Mahāpurushaji's memorable visit to the Home, there came an Ekādāśī-day, and we, the students of the Home, as was the custom, went to the Rāmakṛṣṇa Maṭh in the evening to participate in the singing of *Rāma-nāma-sankīrtanam*. The *sankīrtnam* was held in the main hall of the Maṭh. Overlooking the hall, on the Eastern side is the shrine of Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa ; and on the other three

sides there is a running balcony. The Svāmī who had accompanied Śrī Mahāpurushaji from Belur (the Headquarters of the Rāmakṛṣṇa Order) had been watching me. Most of the time, it appears, I was sitting with closed eyes meditating. After the *sankīrtanam* was over, the Svāmī sent for me, and greeted me with an affection that was exceptional. Outwardly we were strangers. But inwardly I felt as if I had known him intimately for ages. The Svāmī Śaṅkara Mahārāj (Svāmī Apūrvānanda), was rendering personal service to Śrī Mahāpurushaji and was very close to him. It was the sheer grace of Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa that should have made Śaṅkara Mahārāj spot me out and call me. He asked me to come alone the next day. I went to the Maṭh, as I was asked, and met the Svāmī. He took me into the august presence of Śrī Mahāpurushaji and spoke to him about me in Bengali. With a gentle smile and a gracious look the direct disciple of Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa blessed me. From that day onwards I was a daily visitor to the Maṭh. Śaṅkara Mahārāj used to feed me with sweets that had been offered to Śrī Mahāpurushaji. And, I enjoyed the privilege of being in the holy presence for some time at least every day, till Śrī Mahāpurushaji and party left for Ootacamund.

From Ootacamund and from other places like Bangalore, I received frequent letters from Śaṅkara Mahārāj who poured out his affection for me and prayed for the grace of Śrī Mahāpurushaji. In December 1924, Śrī Mahāpurushaji returned to Madras and performed the dedication ceremony of the Residential High School building of the Rāmakṛṣṇa Mission Students' Home. It was an impressive ceremony and of great significance to us who were students of the school. On a day some time after the ceremony, I had the good fortune of receiving initiation from Mahāpurushaji. This was received in the Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa shrine at the Maṭh itself. Every detail connected with this solemn ceremony

was attended to by Śaṅkara Mahārāj, but for whose unbounded affection I would not have had this unique privilege. The experience is still vivid in my memory: The venerable and gracious direct diciple of Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa, seated in the shrine in a mood of exaltation imparting the *mantra* to me, who was just a strippling, and making me repeat it after him. I continued my daily visits to the Maṭh to receive the Master's benediction. When Śrī Mahārāj left for Bombay in January 1925, I went to the Central Station, paid my obeisance to him in the railway coach, and took leave of him.

Several dignitaries visited the Home from time to time at the invitation of the Management. Officials and non-officials, governors and administrators, judges and eminent lawyers, leaders of the people and politicians. The most memorable visit was that of Mahātmā Gandhi. He had changed his mode of dress, he was now dressed like the South Indian peasant: with a piece of cloth around his waist reaching up to the knees and tucked behind. Occasionally there would be a chaddar (uppercloth) thrown round his shoulders. When he entered the Home all eyes were turned on him. There was a halo of purity surrounding him. Here was the Leader of the Nation at whose command millions were ready to sacrifice everything—even their lives. After the initial experiment in *satyāgraha* in South Africa, he had come to India and the mantle of leadership fell on him without his asking. With the Indian National Congress as his instrument he started a non-violent revolution in the country. The masses who had been afraid of the baton of the constable and the fire-arm, were made into heroes by the magic word of the Mahātmā. They were prepared to face any hardship in order to secure freedom for the land. Gandhi revived the Charka (spinning wheel) and wanted the people to wear only hand-spun and hand-woven cloth, boycotting foreign textiles.

It may be interesting to reproduce from my diary the following vows which even I, an usually unimpassioned youth, took for the sake of promoting the cause of independence.

1. Resolve to boycott British goods till Swarāj is won.
2. Wear Khadi as you have been doing for the past several years.
3. Preach the cult of Swadeshi as much as you can.

I find, that after the mention of these vows, the following exclamation addressed to Mother India : ' O Mother, your children are arrayed in a non-violent war against the enemies who have turned a deaf ear to the peaceful pleadings of your greatest Gem, the Mahātmā. '

Quite early in my high school career a few friends and I banded ourselves together into what we then called the ' Khadi Circle. ' Each used to contribute every month a certain amount. The total money collected that month would be used to equip one member with khadi which would thereafter become his habitual wear. Thus in the course of a few months all the members of this circle became khadi-wearers.

The following passage quoted from a short story which I started writing but never completed will reveal the measure of understanding that the young people of my generation had at the time of the new Gandhian technique of war without weaponry.

The heroin of the story, a young patriot, addressed a large number of people who had gathered around her hut thus : ' O ye my brothers and sisters, we shall bind ourselves to the task of achieving freedom for our homeland. Take it for certain, my comrades, that the British Government, strong as it may appear to be with its armaments, cannot but fall at the feet of a nation, determined to be free and to suffer for attaining that freedom. ' A voice from the audience asked, ' How is it possible to throw off the alien rule which

has grown to be so powerful and strong, while we are bereft of all instruments of force?'

'You are under a delusion, my dear brother,' she answered. 'The vital soul-force is within you. The doctrine of the sword can never succeed in opposing the pursuit of truth. Swarāj is our birthright and non-violence our creed. Non-violence is infinitely superior to violence. Forgiveness is more manly than spite. With enlightened forgiveness there must dawn the radiant sun of strength in us which will dispell all the foggy affront that a Dyer and a Frank Johnson could heap upon India's devoted head. Non-violence is the law of our species as violence is the law of the brute. The spirit lies dormant in the brute and he knows no law but that of physical might. Shake off, my brethren, the lethargy that has hitherto bound you to slavedom. It is only because of the ignorance of the masses that a handful of foreigners exercise tyrannical domination over us. Slavish submission to a corrupt contageous and covetous bureaucracy will be impossible if all of us resolve not to be its slaves. O ye, my countrymen, throw off your chains! Break down your prison-doors, press forward fearlessly and strive for liberty and justice'.

After I joined the Rāmakṛṣṇa Students' Home in 1922, Svāmī Satchidānanda left Madras for an extensive tour of North India. Obviously he took a letter of introduction from Svāmī Śarvānanda and visited several centres of the Rāmakṛṣṇa mission. When he was in Bhuvaneswar, the President of the Mission Śrī Mahāpurushaji Maharāj happened to be there. Svāmī Satchidānanda had the good fortune of receiving formal *sannyāsa dīkṣā* from His Holiness and was given the name Rājeśvarānanda. I shall refer to him hereafter by this name. Because of a defective leg which restricted his free movement and because he had a spirit of independence, he chose to live outside the Rāmakṛṣṇa order.

Eventually he found an *āśram* in Andhra Pradesh which was suitable to him. Śrī Sānti Āśram had been founded in 1917 by one Svāmī Omkār. He had gone to America and through correspondence had requested Svāmī Rajeśvarānanda to be in charge of the Āśram. The Svāmī agreed and went to the place with a view to improve it as much as he could.

The Āśram, as its name suggests, is an abode of peace. It is situated on extensive lands in a valley surrounded by Totapalli Hills. It is more that ten miles away from the nearest Railway station. In those days one had to travel by bullock-cart and that too sent to the station by the Āśram. There is a large number of mango-trees and other fruit-trees and flower-plants. There are small one-room tenements scattered all over the place in which *sādhakas* could live. There is a main building with a prayer-hall and a library and next to it a kitchen. My aunt who was living in Madras till then went to the Āśram at the invitation of Svāmī Rājeśvarānanda to look after the kitchen and general management. The Svāmī started two monthly journals, one in English 'Peace' and the other in Telugu 'Śānti'.

I used to go there during the summer vacations. Although it was very hot, I enjoyed the peace and stillness of the place. Visitors and *sādhus* used to come for short or long periods. They were looked after by the Āśram. One remarkable *sādhu* who happened to visit the Āśram during a summer when I was there was sādhu Praṇavānanda. Originally he was from Kerala, but he had spent a long number of years in Andhra area, lecturing, giving talks to small groups—all on Advaita and Śaṅkara. I should say that he was a man of one book—the *Naiṣkarmya-siddhi* of Sureśvarācārya. He had a copy of the book in Malayalam script and used to expound it in Telugu. Under his inspiration Śrī Śaṅkara Jayanti was celebrated at the Āśram in May 1929 for six days. I was asked to read a paper on the occasion. The theme was 'Brahman is

real ; the world is an illusory appearance ; (*brahma satyam jaganmithyā*)'. It may be pertinent to give an extract from that paper here which will show how I understood the teaching of the Great Master then.

'At the back of the seeming world there exists the only Reality, Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute. In and through all the changing phenomena there remains the changeless One which alone is real. There is unity in diversity, there is an identity at the bottom of all the names and forms. This identity, this ultimate Reality, this supreme *Brahman* has neither beginning nor end. It ever was, ever is, and ever will be. It is the one truth without a second. This *Brahman* is referred to in the *Bhagavad-gītā* as the supreme indestructible One. All things that we see with our eyes are apparent. They are not what they seem to be. They are in reality *Brahman*. This inner truth, says Śaṅkara, has neither a beginning nor an end. This changeless Principle knows neither growth nor decay; like ether, after the destruction of the pot, which encloses it, the *Ātman* remains the same unpolluted One, even after the destruction of the body.'

Sādhu Praṇavānanda had his Āśram in Gudivada. In successive years he used to celebrate the Jayanti at several places, including Gudivada, Bangalore, etc. Svāmī Rājeśvarānanda and I were invited to participate in these festivals.

The Sādhu visited us quite often wherever we happened to be and stayed with us for some days each time. His jovial and cheerful company we always enjoyed. He used to tease me for my unworldliness and impracticality. Once he played a practical joke upon me. I was asked to go to the fruit-market and bring some fruit. I went to the market, asked a fruit-seller to give me the fruit, mentioning its name. He gave me some fruit and I paid the price he asked for. When I took the fruit home, Sādhu Praṇavānanda burst into laughter saying, 'This is not the fruit and the price charged is exorbi-

tant !' Sādhu Praṇavānanda kept contact with us till the very end of his life. He passed away at the Gudivada Āśrama, after appointing a successor.

The annual session of the Indian National Congress in the year 1927 was held in Madras. Dr. M. A. Ansari was the President of the Session. Almost all the top leaders including Mahātmā Gandhi and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru attended the Session. It was in December that year. They had converted a lake area into what came to be called then the Congress Nagar. The Rāmakṛṣṇa Maṭh, Mylapore, ran a book-stall in that place for the benefit of those who visited the Congress Session. Some of us, boys of the Home, were put in charge of the stall. I enjoyed being there all the days of the Congress Session. I attended some of the Sessions and had the opportunity of seeing many Congress leaders who had been mere names before. I do not remember now what resolutions were passed and what speeches were made. But under the leadership of Mahātmā Gandhi all were united and they drew up a programme for gaining freedom as early as possible.

I have not cultivated the habit of maintaining a diary regularly. Off and on I used to note down events and days which I would like to remember. Concerning the early years, the diary relating to only one year remains with me now—the one pertaining to the year 1927. Under the date sixth of January 1927, I find the following entry : 'Meditated and read the life of Guru Maharāj from four forty-five a.m. to five a.m.' Just a few days earlier I had received from Śaṅkara Maharāj a copy of the *Life of Sri Ramakrishna* bearing the Foreword of Mahātmā Gandhi, which had just then been published. He had sent it to me from Belur, with Śrī Mahāpurushaji's blessings. I began reading it on the sixth of January 1927. Early morning every day I used to go to the shrine in the Home, sit on the front verandah, and read the *Life*. Even as I recall now, I found presented in the *Life*

a world different from the ordinary one in which we habitually live. With my adolescent imagination I identified myself with the various persons connected with the Saint of Dakṣiṇeṣvar and the entire divine drama was re-enacted before my mind's eye. Under the date twenty-third of March 1927, I find the entry : 'Finished reading the *Life of Sri Ramakrishna*.' It is obvious that I could read, understand and enjoy the *Life* at that age when I was but sixteen, because of the bounteous grace of Śrī Mahāpurushaji Maharāj. I find from the diary that I had also been writing letters to Śrī Mahāpurushaji ; and I have recorded the receipt of a letter from him under the date the seventh of March 1927. That the great Saint should have replied to me by letter shows what great affection he had for his spiritual children and how profound his concern was for them.

I took my School Final Examination in March-April 1928. During the summer I went to Calcutta along with my aunt for the first time. Śaṅkara Maharāj had made all arrangements for our stay. We were lodged in a South Indian Hotel. Early morning every day a young monk who knew Tamil would come from the Belur Maṭh and escort us to Belur. We would offer our obeisance to Śrī Mahāpurushaji, sit in his holy presence for some time and then visit the various temples and places in the Belur Maṭh : the room of Svāmī Vivekānanda which is preserved as it was when he lived in it, the memorial temples erected for the Holy Mother, Svāmiji and Svāmī Brahmānanda (the first President of the Rāmakṛṣṇa Order) and sit watching and contemplating the Holy Ganges flowing. We would spend the whole day in the Maṭh, attend the evening *pūjā* at the shrine of Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa which was then located on the first floor of the main building, and get back to Calcutta for the night. For about a fortnight we were in Calcutta ; we visited all the important places connected with Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa ; and as I saw them what I had read in

the *Life*, came back to my mind most vividly. We went to the Dakṣiṇeśvar temple many a time, spent long hours in the gardens, sat for some time in the room in which Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa had lived, attended the *pūjā* at the shrines of Bhavatāriṇi and Rādhakānta, and drank deeply of the spirituality that was all-pervasive there. Among the other places we visited were the Cossipore garden-house in which Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa spent the last days, the cremation-ground on the banks of the Ganges where the remains of the Master were cremated, Udbodhan Office where the Holy Mother had spent the last years, Svāmī Vivekānanda's parental home and the several service-institutions of the Rāmakṛṣṇa Mission in Calcutta. We were also fortunate in meeting Śrī Mahendranatha Gupta ('M'), the householder disciple of Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa who had recorded the events and conversations of the last five or six years, later published under the title *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*. The very mention of the name of the Master brought forth from his eyes tears of ecstasy. He made kind enquiries about us and invoked for us the grace of Śrī Guru Mahārāj.

On two subsequent occasions I went to Calcutta during the life-time of Śrī Mahāpurushaji Mahārāj—in 1930 and in 1933. These were brief visits ; and I enjoyed the same love and affection at the Belur Maṭh, and the blessing of being in the presence of the Saint. Śrī Mahāpurushaji passed into Mahāsamādhi on Tuesday the 20th of February 1934. The sad news was conveyed to me by Śaṅkara Mahārāj. He felt extremely forlorn as did every *chela* of the Master. I could discern from the latter of Śaṅkara Mahārāj how anguished his heart was and how disconsolate his very being. I wrote to him expressing my feeling of irrepairable loss and expressed to him that he should continue to care for me.

A person who influenced me profoundly was Svāmī Śāśvatānanda who was for a number of years the warden of the Home.

A strict disciplinarian, not given to mincing matters, he had a heart which was soft like butter. Some of us used to go to him with our difficulties and problems and we received from him unfailing consolation and sympathy. He became President of the Rāmakṛṣṇa Maṭh, Mylapore, and after several years he was transferred to Belur, the Headquarters, as Assistant Secretary of the Rāmakṛṣṇa Order. Whenever I went to Calcutta—I had to go at least once a year, as I was connected with the University in some capacity or other—I made it a point to go to Belur and meet him. Every time he received me with open arms and smiling face and made kind inquiries. When he was in Madras, he used to advise Svāmīs as well as others to go to Tiruvannāmalai and meet Śrī Ramaṇa Maharshi.

5

Śrī Ramaṇa Maharshi

It was Svāmī Rājeśvarānanda that took me to Tiruvannāmalai and introduced me to the Sage Ramaṇa when I was barely eighteen. To meet a sage and be acquainted with him is not an ordinary occurrence. It must be the result of a good stock of merit. I consider myself extremely fortunate, therefore, to have had the privilege of meeting the Master. As I recall those three days I spent basking in the sunshine of Śrī Ramaṇa's glorious presence, I have no words to express the benefit I derived from that experience. To sit before him was itself a deep spiritual education, to look at him was to have one's mind stilled, to fall within the sphere of his beatific vision was to be inwardly elevated.

During one of my early visits a few prominent people of the town of Tiruvannāmalai arranged for a lecture in the hall of a local High School. Having been a student of the *Gītā* from childhood, this is what I said in the course of that lecture: ' In the last part of the second chapter, in response to Arjuna's questions Śrī Kṛṣṇa describes the characteristics of the sage, the one of steady wisdom (*sthitaprajña*). Many people may wonder if one with such characteristics is possible. My answer to such people would be ' Come to Tiruvannāmalai

and meet Śrī Ramaṇa Maharshi, your doubts will be dispelled.'

The life of Śrī Ramaṇa is fairly well-known. Born at a holy place called Tirucculi, Venkaṭarāman, as his name then was, lost his father early. The whole family moved to Madurai in order to live under the protection of the paternal uncle. Venkaṭaraman was studying in a local Mission School. When he was seventeen years old in 1896 the plenary experience of the non-dual Self came to him all on a sudden, preceded by a brief death-experience. After this happening he lost all interest in worldly life. Sometime earlier he had heard a relation of his mention the name 'Aruṇācala' which had exerted on him a magnetic influence. The memory of Aruṇācala came to him now. And since he knew that it was the same as Tiruvannāmalai, he managed to leave Madurai one day and reach Tiruvannāmalai, the place of the Hill of the Holy Beacon after an epic journey partly by train and partly by foot. The first few years he lived in the different parts of the temple of Aruṇācaleśvara. Later he chose to dwell in several caves on the Hill by turn. His fame spread not only in the town but also in distant places. He was observing silence not under a vow. He went without food altogether not because he was observing austerities. He himself said later on that he was not inclined to speak and therefore he was silent and similarly he was not inclined to eat. The experience which he had had in Madurai continued all the time and he had no need for any *sādhana*. When he was staying in the Virūpākṣa cave, his mother and widowed brother joined him. The latter embraced *sannyāsa* bearing the name Nirañjanānanda Swamī. Since the cave could not accommodate the increasing number of devotees an *Āśrama* was put up a little higher on the Hill. It came to be known as Skandāśramam. When the mother died there in 1922, her body was brought down the Hill and buried near what is known as

Pāli-tīrtham. Eventualy the Sage began to live in a hut near the place and thus the present *Āśrama* came into being and soon grew into large dimensions by the effort and hard work of Śri Nirañjanānanda Swamī.

When I first went there, the main building was an oblong hall with tiled roof. There was no electricity. The couch which served both as seat and bed for the Sage was placed in the North-Eastern corner of the hall. There was a *punka* hanging from the roof over the couch, it used to be drawn from outside the hall whenever it was sultry and air was needed. There were a few attendants always alert to render whatever little assistance was necessary. On a stool in front of the Sage was placed an iron receptacle where there was live coal into which from time to time *dhūpam* used to be put which filled the hall with sweet aroma. In those days the visiting devotees who came to stay were not too many. We sat before the Sage in the hall and also slept during the nights in the same hall. Śrī Ramaṇa sat on the couch or at times reclined. He never slept on a bed; he rested even during the night in a reclining posture. Next to the hall there was an office-building and across the building there was a small structure which served as the kitchen and the dining-room. The temple over the grave of the mother had just then commenced to be built.

Noteworthy was the fact that anything connected with Ramaṇa was under perfect order and regularity. Nothing about his person was clumsy or slack, regularity and punctuality prevailed. Everything took place with utmost precision. The Sage was a perfect model even in his outward behaviour. He would get up at three or four in the morning and help in the kitchen-work such as dressing the vegetables, stitching leaf-plates and even in the cooking itself. At five o'clock the Master would be already in the little hall listening to the Vedic chanting along with his devotees. Thereafter he would go

for a walk. Breakfast used to be at seven. The Sage had all his meals in a common dining room with everyone else. He would refuse anything which had not been served to the others, nor would he accept a small helping more than what he could eat. He disapproved of wasting even a small grain of rice. His leaf-plate would be as clean, as new, even after he had finished his meal ; so perfectly would he wipe even the last bit of food from it. When breakfast was over, he would return to the hall and visitors along with devotees would enjoy his presence until it was time for lunch, this was at eleven o'clock. There would be more chanting in the evenings at five. In addition to the Vedas, Tamil hymns used to be recited, some of the compositions were on Ramaṇa sung by his poet-devotee Śrī Muruganār. He had been a powerful patriotic poet before he met the Master. After that he dedicated his exquisite gift to devotional poesy to the Maharshi. At 7.15 p.m. after dinner the devotees would once again sit in the presence of the Sage and meditate until about 9.30 p.m.

Just to sit in the meditation hall, meditating or enjoying his beatific presence, or witnessing the questions and answers between the Master and devotees or visitors—all this was a unique experience.

During one of my visits to the *Āśrama* Dr. Paul Brunton came there to interview the Sage. Before he came to India he had been to Africa to find and acquaint himself with some of the mystical traditions in that area. This same purpose brought him to India. He met several yogins and spiritual leaders, before he arrived at Tiruvannāmalai. While he was still in Madras an Indian friend who was an author, took him to His Holiness the Sage of Kāñcī. This meeting was an extremely important one in the life of Paul Brunton. I find it most worthwhile to quote from his impressions of that fateful visit :

'His noble face, pictured in grey and brown, takes an

honoured place in the long portrait gallery of my memory. That elusive element which the French aptly term *spirituel* is present in his face. His expression is modest and mild, the large dark eyes being extraordinarily tranquil and beautiful. The nose is short, straight, and classically regular. There is a rugged little beard on his chin, and the gravity of his mouth is most noticeable. Such a face might have belonged to one of the saints who graced the Christian Church during the Middle Ages, except that this one possesses the added quality of intellectuality. I suppose we of the practical West would say that he has the eyes of a dreamer. Somehow, I feel in an inexplicable way that there is something more than mere dreams behind those heavy lids.'

Towards the end of the audience with the Sage, Paul Brunton asked His Holiness the important question about finding a spiritual guide. He asked if His Holiness would accept him as a pupil, or if he would recommend someone as his spiritual master. His Holiness answered : 'I am at the Head of a public institution, a man whose time no longer belongs to himself. My activities demand almost all my time. For years I have spent only three hours in sleep each night. How can I take personal pupils ? You must find a master who devotes his time to them.' He directed him to go to Tiruvannāmalai and meet Ramaṇa Maharshi.

Thus instructed, in January 1931 Paul Brunton met the Master in Tiruvannāmalai. He has described his journey to what he called the jungle hermitage and his interview with the Maharshi in a most gripping way in his book *A Search in Secret India*. An Upaniṣadic text says : 'The Self is gained by him alone whom it chooses.' In a very similar way, Brunton observes : 'It is a singular fact—and perhaps a significant one—that before I can begin to try my luck in this strange quest, fortune herself comes in quest of me.' When he arrived at the *Āśrama*, he was taken to the hall where the Maharshi

was reclining on his couch. Adapting himself to the Hindu custom, he placed a plate with fruits in front of the Sage, and then sat down on the floor near Ramaṇa's couch. The Sage seemed not to have noticed the newcomer, he was in the state of abstraction which was so natural with him. As usual the devotees were sitting in pin-drop silence. It was a blissful hour that passed without anyone daring to interrupt this sublime atmosphere. The Western seeker, whose profession was journalism which demands from a person to be inquisitive and garrulous, felt freed from such promptings. He found himself transformed in a moment. There was no need to ask any questions for, even unasked, the truth may reveal itself. His friend, who introduced him to the Master, tried to remind his spellbound guest to ask something. But not even this reminder was of any avail, for Brunton did not wish to disturb the inward peace he was now feeling. Previously he had prepared a long list of questions to put to the Sage, but in his sacred presence they had lost all importance. Only at a later meeting could the Western writer bring himself to ask a few questions. To this new visitor, as to all who put queries to him, the Maharshi's answers were as always designed to lead the questioner to a state where such questions could not arise because they would have lost all value. Many well-meaning people feel concerned with the world and wish to do good in order to help it. Brunton too asked about issues such as saving the world from chaos and war. The Sage's response was : ' There is One who governs the world and it is His concern to look after it. He who has given life to the world knows how to do so. He bears the burden of this world, not you.'

' As you are, so is the world. Without understanding yourself, what is the use of trying to understand the world ? This is a question that seekers after truth need not consider. People waste their energies over all such questions. First, find out

the truth behind yourself, then you will be in a better position to understand the truth behind the world of which yourself is a part.'

Brunton has recorded his experience when he first met the Maharshi thus : ' The hour of our first meeting is still graven on my memory. I met him unexpectedly. He made no attempt at formal introduction. For an instant, those sibylline eyes gazed into mine, but all the stained earth of my past and the white flowers that had begun to spring upon it, were alike seen during that one tinkle of the bell of time. There in that seated being was a great impersonal force that read the scales of my life with better sight than I could ever hope to do.'

' In the presence of this sage one felt security and inward peace. The spiritual radiations which emanated from him were all-penetrating. I learnt to recognise in his person the sublime truths which he taught, while I was no less hushed into reverence by his incredibly sainted atmosphere. He possessed a deific personality which defies description.'

'One could not forget that wonderful pregnant smile of his, with its hint of wisdom and peace won from suffering and experience. He was the most understanding man I have ever known ; you could be sure always of some words from him that would smooth your way a little, and that word always *verified* what your deepest feeling had told you already.'

First of September 1946 marked the Golden Jubilees of Ramaṇa's arrival at Tiruvannāmalai. The devotees wanted to celebrate this event in a fitting manner. The Sage, as was natural to him, was indifferent. He tried to dissuade them at first, but when they persisted he allowed them to have their way. If the celebration would be beneficial to their spiritual progress, let them have it. From all parts of India the devotees arrived in large numbers to share in the special blessing of the day, which began early in the morning with invocations.

Special verses and hymns in several languages were read out to the vast gathering. In the afternoon there was a public gathering at which several speakers including me paid homage to the Sage. This was followed by a music-concert and the celebrations ended with Vedic chanting. Ramaṇa sat through the entire programme on a decorated dais but without any personal adornments or insignia of honour or distinction. He radiated the peace and grace that were characteristically his.

In 1948-49 when I was in the U. S. A. (an account of this visit will be given later) I heard that the Maharshi was ill. Towards the end of 1948 a small nodule appeared below the elbow of his left arm. After a couple of operations it was diagnosed as sarcoma. When the doctors suggested amputating the arm above the affected part, the Sage replied with a smile, 'There is no need for alarm, the body is itself a disease. Let it have its natural end. Why mutilate it?' Further operations proved to be of no avail. When I returned from America in 1949, I hastened to the *Āśrama* to meet the Master. In the evening of the day I was there, I had the unique opportunity of giving an account of my American visit to the devotees gathered in his presence.

The end came on 14th April 1950. That evening the Sage gave *darśana* to all the devotees that had come to see him. He was on a small couch in the little room that had been specially built outside the new hall attached to the mother's temple. Devotees used to queue up every day to have a look at him through the open door. This is what the attendants said about the last day : The devotees sat singing Ramaṇa's hymn to Aruṇācala with the refrain *Aruṇācala-Śiva*. He asked an attendant who was in the room to help him sit up, and opened his luminous and gracious eyes for a brief while. There was a smile, a tear of bliss trickled down from the outer corner of one of his eyes. And at 8.47 p.m.

the breathing stopped. There was no struggle, no spasm, none of the signs of death. At that very moment a comet moved slowly across the sky, passed over the summit of the Holy Hill Aruṇācala and disappeared behind it. Many even in Madras City had seen this phenomenon. In the morning-papers the next day the passing away of the Master was announced. Svāmī Rajeśvarānanda and I immediately left for Tiruvannāmalai. We reached the *Āśram* at 11 a.m. By that time the body of the Sage had been brought outside the temple to a high platform and placed in a sitting posture, facing the South. Nirañjanānanda Swamī was very kind in letting me go near and touch the right thigh and offer obeisance. The burial took place at sun-down. The numerous devotees who were there felt utterly disconsolate. It was an irrepairable bereavement for them, although they knew in their heart of hearts that the Master had not gone anywhere.

The Sage did not found any new school of thought or cult. He taught the ageless truth of Vedānta. This is a universal and non-sectarian teaching. To even call it Advaita (non-duality) is really a concession because of the inherent limitations that language bears with it.

6

Collegiate Education

I passed the S. S. L. C. Examination in March-April 1928. The next step was to join a college. The first two years of collegiate education constituted what was then called the Intermediate Course. I was admitted to Madras Presidency College. It was the Government's Metropolitan College in what constituted then the Presidency of Madras. From school to college, the adjustment took some time. The teachers in a Government College naturally did not have any abiding interest in the College, because they were subject to periodical transfers. One professor, for instance, would come to the class-room and if some students were making cat-calls or flying paper aeroplanes—their mischief did not go beyond these—the professor concerned would say, 'I do not care whether you listen to my lecture or not, anyway I get my salary'. Another professor would come into the class-room, and if he was not inclined to take the class he would put to the students the question, 'Do we want to stay inside the class-room or outside?' Some students would say 'Out side'. The professor would then dismiss the class and leave. A professor who had just then returned from a visit to Oxford would come into the class-room and if he found the fan not

working he would say, 'Here there are only two seasons, one hot and the other hotter'. And then he would go away after saying he would not take the class. In those days the Principal was an Englishman, the Head of the Department of English was also a Britisher. At that time the students on the whole were law-abiding and submitted themselves to discipline. There were no strikes, no lists of demands, no unruly scenes. A good number of students of all Colleges were sympathetic to the Freedom Movement ; they sometimes participated in processions, demonstrations and marches organised by the Indian National Congress. If some aggression on the masses by the police or army occurred anywhere in India, there would be observed what was called Hartal (Closure of the doors of shops, business-houses, etc.) and students also would abstain from attending colleges.

Besides English which was our first language (Part I) my second language (Part II) was Sanskrit. Part III consisted of optional subjects, in my case history and logic. At the end of the first year of my college studies, I came out of the Rāmakṛṣṇa Students' Home and occupied a flat in Triplicane near the College. After some time Svāmī Rajeśvarānanda and my aunt returned from Śānti Āśram to live with me, as by then Svāmī Omkār had returned from the U. S. A. I had one more year of the Intermediate Course, which I completed in March-April 1930.

After one passed the Intermediate Examination there were two courses open to the Humanities student. He might take the B. A. Course of two years' duration or join the B.A. (Hons.) Course which was for three years. Most students took the B. A. Those who wanted to do the M.A. had to spend two years more. The examination for B. A. (Hons) and M. A. was the same. Those who were above the average preferred the B. A. (Hons.) Course ; for they would save one year. After taking the B. A. (Hons.) Degree, they could take

the M. A. Degree after the lapse of one year without any further course or examination. I decided to join the B. A. (Hons.) Course. As regards the choice of subject it was between Sanskrit and Philosophy. If it was Sanskrit I could have continued in Presidency College. But I wanted to study Philosophy. There was a well-known Philosopher, Professor P. N. Srinivasachari, who was the Head of the Department of Philosophy at Pachaiyappa's College. He was a friend of the Rāmakṛṣṇa Mission and I had known him when I was in the Rāmakṛṣṇa Mission Students' Home. Professor Srinivasachari was keen that Indian Philosophy should come into its own in Indian Universities. He was proficient in both European and Indian Philosophies. Through his good offices I joined the B. A. (Hons.) Course in Philosophy at Pachaiyappa's College. During the first year, besides a few elementary courses in Philosophy, we had to do what used to be called Preliminary English. At the end of the first year, we had to appear for the University Examination in English consisting of two papers. The other two years were entirely devoted to the study of Philosophy. In those days, the Madras Christian College was in its old building opposite the High Court. There was intercollegiate teaching arrangement between Pachaiyappa's and Christian Colleges which were located in the same area of the city. The Principal of the Christian College was a Scotsman, the Reverend A. G. Hogg. From Pachaiyappa's we went to the Christian College for two courses, one in Political Philosophy and the other in Psychology (in those days Psychology was a part of Philosophy). From the Christian College students used to come to Pachaiyappa's for courses in Indian Philosophy. I appeared for the final Examination in 1933 and secured the only First Class of the year.

What was I next to do? Several well-meaning friends suggested that I should appear for the Indian Administrative

Service Examination. But my heart was in Philosophy. Therefore I decided to join the University Department of Philosophy for Research. I took the very valuable advice of Professor P. N. Srinivasachari in the matter. By the time I came to know him he was living the life of a *vānaprastha*. Not far from his family home in Mylapore he had established an Āśrama for his own living, with a library which he named after Śrī Kṛṣṇa. I used to go to him very often. He gave his writings to me as and when they were ready and invited suggestions. As regards my proposal to do research he suggested that I could work on Srī Vidyāraṇya's *Pañcadaśī*. Although he was a Viśiṣṭādvaitin and has written a sumptuous Volume on the Philosophy of Viśiṣṭādvaita, he was broad-minded and wrote books on Advaita as well as on Bhedābheda. Making use of Kantian terms he was fond of distinguishing three types of Advaita : Pure Advaita, Practical Advaita, and Pure-Practical Advaita.

7

Research at the University

The Reader and Head of the Department of Philosophy was Sri S. S. Suryanarayana Sastri. It was a very small Department then. It consisted of only one teacher and two or three Research-students. The Research Departments were then located in a rented building in Royapettah. The present spacious buildings had not yet come into being. When I met Sri Sastri, he was very happy to accept me as a Research-student. At that time there was only one other Research-scholar doing a thesis on Śaiva Siddhānta for the Ph. D. Degree. I first started reading the *Pañcadaśī* and writing essays thereon. I used to meet Sri Sastri periodically and submit to him my essays. Very soon after I started on the work I discovered that there was another text ascribed to Śrī Vidyāraṇya which should form the main source of material for a Ph. D. Thesis. The text is called the *Vivaraṇa-prameya-saṅgraha*. This is what I have said in the Preface to the First Edition of my Doctoral Thesis :

'One of the most favoured books which has found a permanent place in a study of the Advaita system is the *Pañcadaśī* But the work which is more important for Advaita dialectics is the *Vivaraṇa-premeya-saṅgraha* which is a summary of the

topics dealt with in the *Vivaraṇa* of Prakāśatman, which is a gloss of Padmapāda's *Pañcapādikā*, which in its turn is a commentary on the *Śaṅkarabhāṣya* on the first four aphorisms of the *Vedānta-sūtra*. Another work of Bhāratītīrtha-Vidyāraṇya from which I have drawn material is the *Dṛg-dṛśya-viveka*. But since a systematic treatment of the Advaita philosophy was not possible from a knowledge of these treatises alone, I had also to draw largely from the works of other preceptors like Dharmarāja, Vimuktātman, Citsukha and Appayya Dīkṣita.'

As regards the identity of the author I had to come to a conclusion different from the traditional view, on the strength of evidence that I gathered in the course of my research. The tradition has it that Vidyāraṇya, whom it identifies with Mādhava, occupied the *gādi* of the Sringeri Maṭha from 1377 to 1386 A. D. He was responsible for the founding of the Vijayanagara Empire and was the friend, philosopher and guide of its early rulers. His predecessor on the Sringeri Pīṭha was Bhāratītīrtha. It is possible that Vidyāraṇya (Forest of Learning) was a title attached to both the Preceptors. I came to the conclusion that the *Vivaraṇa-prameya-saṅgraha* and the *Pañcadaśī* were the works of Bhāratītīrtha-Vidyāraṇya.

I completed my doctoral thesis in the course of two years (1933-35). But I could not submit it for the Ph. D. immediately because there was a rule that only three years after passing the B. A. (Hons.) or M. A. Degree one could supplicate for the Ph. D. Sri Sastri wrote to the University authorities for an exemption, but it was not granted. I sent the thesis to the University in 1936. I learnt that the Board of Examiners consisted of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, Dr. A. B. Keith and Dr. F. W. Thomas, all of whom were at that time in Oxford. That the thesis was accepted for the award of the Doctoral Degree was announced in 1937, and Messrs. Luzac

and Co. sponsored the publication of the work in 1938. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan in his Foreword had this to say:

'I had an opportunity of reading Dr. Mahadevan's book a few months ago, and thought it was a masterly survey of the Advaita doctrine, as set forth in the writings of Vidyāraṇya.....I should like to say that Dr. Mahadevan expounds Vidyāraṇya's views with great clarity and penetration ; his book fills a distinct need and will be a worthy addition to the literature in English on the subject.'

Sri S. S. Suryanarayana Sastri was a hard task-master to please ; but my association with him was uniformly pleasant and sweet. I was intimately acquainted with him from 1933 to 1942 when he prematurely passed away. During the last ten years of his life, besides the important work that he did in the field of Advaita, he became an ardent devotee of Lord Subrahmaṇya. During one summer vacation, I went to Kodaikanal at his invitation and stayed with him in the house which he owned there. He treated me as his brother and took every care of me when I was there. During the very bad years of the second world war the City of Madras was almost vacated. Offices were moved out, many citizens went to interior places. We, i.e., the Svāmī, my aunt and I, stayed for some time in a place near Bangalore. When we returned to Madras, a friend of ours who had retired from Government service and had settled in Bangalore requested us to occupy a bungalow which he owned in Egmore on a nominal rent. This house was very close of Sri Sastri's residence. It was at this time that he fell seriously ill. I used to go every day to his residence and look after him. This gave him great consolation. He said to me : 'It is God's grace that brought you from Triplicane to Egmore and made you live near me.'

I shall have occasion, in a subsequent chapter, to detail the work that the Department of Philosophy accomplished under Sri Sastri's headship.

8

All-India Pilgrim Tour

Before I commence to relate how I started teaching, there are two events which I should like to refer to.

(1) All-India Pilgrim Tour and (2) Essay Competition for Asian Youth.

In 1930 there was an announcement by a tourist company that it was organising a special train for pilgrims. It was a pioneer venture. Its architect was Sri M. R. V. Guru Rao. Svāmī Rājeśvarānanda enterted into correspondence with the company, and we decided to take advantage of this opportunity of visiting holy places in North India. I took leave from College for the necessary number of days. September-October is a pleasant season in the North. Svāmī Rājeśvarānanda, my aunt and I along with Sādhu Praṇavānanda travelled by the train. Sri Guru Rao took particular care of us. The travellers had not much to worry about arrangements at the various places of visit. An advance-party of cooks and servants would be sent ahead to the next place. We could leave all our luggage in the train itself. Transport and accommodation etc., were provided by the Company. The first place at which the train halted was Tungabhadra. The Railway Station is known as the

Mantrālayam Road. After a bath in the sacred river, we were taken by buses to Mantrālaya where there is the shrine of Śrī Rāghavendra Svāmī. That night we came back to the train and continued our journey. The next place of visit was Pandharipura. On the river Candrabhāgā there is a famous shrine of Viṭṭhala. This holy place in Mahārāṣṭra is well known for its saints who sang hymns called *abhaṅgas*. Years later when I visited the Śrī Kṛṣṇa temple at Udipi I saw in the temple-courtyard pieces of fire-wood arranged in the form of a temple-car. When I asked the friend who took me there what it was, he told me that the temple was famous for its different levels of feeding the pilgrims and devotees and that the fire-wood was required for keeping the ovens burning. He also added that the supreme *Brahman* appears in three forms at three sacred places : at Udipi as *Anna-brahma* (food-*Brahman*), at Tirumalai Tirupati as *Śvarna-brahma* (gold-*Brahman*) and at Pandarpur as *Nāda-brahma* (sound-*Brahman*). In this temple there would always be *bhajan*-parties singing and dancing by turns. This would go on both day and night. We were thrilled to hear the *bhajans* rendered with such devotion and fervour. Nasik was the next place of halt. According to tradition it was here that Lakṣmaṇa disfigured Śūrpaṇakhā, Rāvaṇa's sister, when she tried to misbehave. Not far from Nasik is the Trayambaka Mountain. We went there and saw the source of the Godāvarī. The train thereafter took us to Bombay and from Bombay to Ahmedabad. While in Ahmedabad we went to Sabarmati Āśram which had been started by Mahātmā Gandhi. At that time Gandhi was away in London attending the Round Table Conference. We met Kasturba in the Āśram, seated at the spinning-wheel. She told us cryptically ' khadi pheno ' (wear hand-spun and hand-woven cloth). We then visited some beauty-spots like Udaipur, Gwalior and then went to Dvārakā. We had to go by boat

to Bed-Dvārakā where the Śrī Kṛṣṇa temple is. We saw there also one of the Pīṭhas established by Ādi Śaṅkara. After this, the train stopped at places like Jamnagar and then we went on to Delhi. New Delhi was just then being built. We visited places of importance like the Red Fort and Kutab Minar. From Delhi we journeyed to Hardvar. The sight of the Ganges is glorious there. We spent a night at the place in a building abutting the river. We also visited the Ārya Samāj Gurukul at Kankhal. From Hardvar we went to Rishikesh by road. It is at this place that the Ganges descends from the mountains to the plains. We met Svāmī Śivānanda who was then staying at Kaivalya Āśrama. It was only later on that he started the Divine Life Society and built an Āśrama of his own. Svāmī Rājesvarānanda and I had known him already. We went to the other side of the Ganges over the hanging bridge called Lakṣmaṇ-jhūlā and visited Svargāśrama which was and is still serving numerous *sannyāsins*.

Returning to Hardvar, our train speeded on to Allahabad. Svāmī Rājesvarānanda and I deviated from the charted route for a day to go to Lucknow and see Svāmī Nārāyaṇji, a disciple of Svāmī Rāmatīrtha. Prayāga which is in the neighbourhood of Allahabad town is the place where three holy rivers meet, the Ganges, the Jamunā and the subterranian Sarasvatī. We, all of us, took our holy bath there. A place of interest for me particularly in Allahabad was the residence of Pandit Jawarharlal Nehru. When some of us went there and entered the gate, Mrs. Kamala Nehru was in the garden tending to some plants. She welcomed us and asked us to go into the building and look around. My impression is that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was serving a prison-sentence at that time.

The next place of visit was the holy of holies, Kāśī. It has always been the spiritual centre of India. The city of

Kāśī lies between two small rivers that join the Ganges, Vāraṇā and Asī. Therefore Kāśī is called Vāraṇasī. We stayed for about five days in Kāśī. The temple of Lord Viśvanātha has a charm of its own. In the *sanctum sanctorum* the *Liṅgam* is placed in a square pit in one corner. One could go and touch the *Liṅgam*, pour water on it and offer flowers. Demolishing a major part of the temple Aurangazeb had built a Mosque with one wall of the temple serving as the wall of the mosque. One felt sorry for the Mughal for desecrating the temple. By the side of the temple of Lord Viśvanātha is the shrine of the Devī Annapūrṇā. The approach is through narrow streets which are zigzag in shape and lined on either side with shops. These narrow streets are usually blocked with cows that roam about freely. We took a boat trip on the Ganges from one end to the other, looking at the numerous ghats (bathing places). Memories of the association of Ādi Śaṅkara with this city came crowding into my mind. We specially visited the Maṇikarṇikā ghat where, according to tradition, he wrote his commentaries. He has composed hymns on Kāśī Viśvanātha, Annapūrṇā, Kālabhairava, Gaṇgā and Kāśī itself. We saw the Rāmakṛṣṇa Āśrama and the hospital run by the mission called Sevāśrama. We crossed the Gaṅgā and went to the other side to see the palace of the Rājā of Kāśī. One of the other important landmarks we saw was the Banaras Hindu University founded by Pandit Madan Mohan Malavīya near the Asighat. Leaving Kāśī, we went to Gayā. Here there is a temple where Viṣṇupāda is installed. Hindus go there to perform the *śrāddha* ceremony (which is devoted to the departed ancestors). It is believed that if one performs the *śrāddha* here, he need not perform it later. We also visited Buddha-gayā where there is the Bodhi-tree underneath which Prince Siddhārtha became enlightened (Buddha). The Buddha temple was then under the mangement of a Śaṅkarācārya. Calcutta was

the next place of visit. In those days it was a clean city. I have already referred to an earlier visit to Calcutta. We were taken to some of the monuments of tourist attraction such as the Jain Marble Temple, the Victoria Memorial (Building) and Museum, etc. Leaving Calcutta, we went to Bhuvaneśvar, the city of temples built in Utkal style. The biggest temple is that of *Liṅga-rāja*. In the *sanctum sanctorum* there is a *Liṅgam* of enormous size. From there we proceeded to Puri Jagannath. The temple of Lord Jagannath is a huge one. In the *sanctum sanctorum* there are large images of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Balarāma and Subhadrā made of wood. They are taken out once a year in a huge temple-car. It is this car that has lent to the English dictionary the word *Juggernaut*. One other place of importance which we visited was the *Maṭh* and *Pīṭha* established by Ādi Śaṅkara. We then went to Viśākhapaṭnam where there is the well-known sea-port and ship-building yard. A holy place near it is the hill on which there is a famous temple of Nṛsimha (Simhācalam), to which also we went. The train next stopped at Rajahmundry on the banks of the Godāvarī. The main purpose of this visit was to take a dip in the holy river. We then stopped at Vijayawada. Here again the purpose was to have a bath in the Kṛṣṇa river. Leaving Vijayawada, we came back to Madras. It was a comfortable journey, a well conducted tour.

Srī Guru Rao became very much attached to us. On subsequent trips he invited Svāmī Rājeṣvarānanda to travel by the train as spiritual instructor. Personally, Sri Guru Rao was very affectionate to me. On a subsequent occasion he took me along with him to some of the holy places connected with the Mādhvas. I have enjoyed hospitality several times at his home in Bangalore.

9

Youth and Universal Religion

Svāmī Rājeśvarānanda saw an announcement regarding an Essay Competition offered to the youth of Asia. The participants were to be not more than thirty years of age. The theme set was *How Can Youth Contribute to the Realisation of a Universal Religion*. The New History Society, New York, which made this announcement had already conducted several essay-competitions for the youth living in other parts of the world like America, Europe and Africa. Mr. Mirza Ahamed Sohrab who was the Director of this Society was a devoted disciple of Abdul Baha who was a successor to Baha-Ulla, founder of Bahaism. The main teaching of this new religion was that mankind is one and the core of religion is the same by whatever name we may call it. The Asian Competition was held in 1934.

Svāmī Rājeśvarānanda implored me to write an essay for this competition. At first I was not inclined, but subsequently I wrote an Essay in order to please him and gave it to him to be forwarded to New York.

A bulky mimeographed Volume was published in 1935 bearing the title *Light from the East*. The editor was Mr. Haridas T. Mazumdar who was also one of the judges

who evaluated the essays. Three essays had to be selected for three prizes, carrying respectively $ 300, 200, 100. On the whole two-hundred and twenty-nine essays were received by the Society from fourteen countries in Asia. I was awarded the second prize. The first prize went to a Chinese woman. Two essays were awarded the Third prize. At page 51 of the Volume the editor has made the following observation : 'In the previous competitions of the New History Society there had always been unanimity in regard to the first prize-winners. In this one, however, there was no such unanimity.'

I am reproducing below a substantial portion of my paper. I start by saying that for promoting peace not only are a league of nations etc. necessary but a league of religions as well. My reasoning is that the motive behind the league of nations is based on fear and mistrust, whereas a league of religions would be based on true understanding of universal, principles of religion as such.

The dangers of total catastrophy are recognised even by the magnates of power.; so they feel compelled to recognise the futility of war and the fatal consequences of mutual strife. I further submit that it is not the politicians and strategists who can abolish the differences between nations but it is the sages.

I do admit that religion has been so misrepresented and distorted by interested persons whose narrow-mindedness has caused division and disharmony. But I try to point out that we should not blame religion itself for this. I explain the origin of the word which means to bind, and the Indian equivalent *dhṛ* which means to hold, and that Islam means peace. And I say that it is the function of religion to unite and spread goodwill.

After giving various definitions, I conclude by saying that these are only partial views of religion. I say that it is the

whole of life and not a part thereof. After bringing to notice what Jesus proclaimed, viz., that it shall not profit a man if he gain the whole world but lose his own soul, I go on to say that Hegel characterises religion as the knowledge possessed by the finite mind of its nature as absolute Mind. Then I mention that the *Upaniṣads* teach that the individual self is non-different from *Brahman*. I bring in also Mohammad who declared that other than the 'I' is the supreme, which is God. Thus I try to show that all great Prophets and Sages have the same unitive experience which is the essence of religion.

Another paragraph I dedicate to this theme in which I say that priests crib and cabin religion into narrow grooves while the Prophets strip religion of its accretions and teach its truths as having universal application. I further say that the Saints and Prophets of the world, who teach that the Reality is that which is unconditioned by time, space and causation is the basic principle of the universe, constitute one tribe.

Then I elaborate a little on the pitfalls of religion such as too much adherence to formality and uniformity. Though it appears to be a paradox, it is in reality a supreme truth that in individualising religion we are at the same time universalising it. Religion is something personal and intimate. It is the inner evolution of the soul. So I attempt to show that too much regimentation in religion is not beneficial. Also, true religion is incompatible with blind belief. In appealing to the spirit, it appeals to all without distinctions of class and race.

My feeling is that it is not the creation of a new religion that is needed, but an understanding of the true principles that inspired all great faiths. When people come to know the unifying truth, there will be no more strife among men.

Then I implicate the role youth can play in bringing about

such understanding, because they are bridges between the past and the future, and it is their responsibility to create either a better world or a bad one.

I explain by showing that they have the necessary qualities such as enthusiasm, less prejudice and more drive than others.

I am aware of the immense task that is asked of them to work for such an ideal. I suggest study-circles under the guidance of idealistic teachers. Then they should teach the masses through propaganda via press-media, speeches convening parliaments for sharing ideals and an inauguration of a league of religions with well-organised branches all over the world for disseminating right knowledge about religion.

I do not agree with those who advocate non-religion as the Positivists do. If youth is sick of religion it is not religion itself but religion as preached and practised by the majority at the present time that is the cause of so much misunderstanding.

I end by turning the mind to the day when the world will become a veritable paradise of men and women living in harmony and peace, realising the unity underlying the diverse faiths and beholding the splendid sight of the many coloured lights blending into one Supreme Radiance.

10

Pudukkottai Interlude

As already mentioned I completed my research-project in 1935. In June-July that year there was an advertisement in the papers calling for applications for the post of Lecturer in Logic at Raja's College, Pudukkottai, which was then a small native state in the South not far from Tiruchirappalli. The college was a Junior College offering only the two year intermediate course. Sri Suryanarayana Sastri advised me to send in my application which I did. A few days later I received a letter from the Principal of that College asking me if I would go to Pudukottai and meet him on a particular date. I went there, saw him at his house in the morning of the appointed day. The Principal appeared to be a nice gentleman. He conversed with me for a time and then said, ' Since you are here, could you please address the College students in the forenoon today ? ' I replied that I would be glad to. And he asked what the theme would be. I answered without a moment's thought ' Śaṅkara as I know him '. I went to the College. The students were assembled in a hall as also some of the staff members. The Principal presided over the meeting and introduced me to the audience. Imagine ! I had ventured to speak on Śaṅkara to intermediate students !

I spoke for an hour. I do not know whether they understood what I said, but there was pin-drop silence. After the meeting, I took leave of the Principal and returned to Madras. In a few days' time therafter I received from the Principal of Raja's College the order of appointment. I learnt later on that this was the Principal's method of choosing a candidate for the post of Lecturer and that he had tried several other applicants earlier putting them to the same test.

I went to Pudukkottai and joined the College. I had to teach Logic to two classes, the Junior and the Senior Intermediate, Deductive Logic for the Junior, and Inductive Logic for the Senior. Some of the students later on told me that when they saw me entering the College on the first day, they thought that I was a student coming to join the College.

The first few days I lived in a hotel. Very soon a neat little house was fixed for me in an extension near the Railway station and away from the Centre of the town. Svāmī Rājeśvarānanda and my aunt arrived and we settled down in that house. I was to spend two years teaching in Raja's College, 1935-'37.

Under the British Rule there were a number of what used to be called native states, each ruled over by a Prince. Pudukkottai had at that time a Prince who was a minor and so the state was under the rule of an administrator who was a retired British I.C.S. person. His word was law in the state. As he was allergic to noise he had declared the area surrounding the residency a no-sound area. I noticed that his hobby was cutting wood. I went to him only once on the advice of a Judge of the High Court of the place who was a friend, to pay to him a courtesy visit.

I must say that I enjoyed meeting with the students and teaching them. The College was a co-educational institution. It was the only College there and so women-students were also admitted although they were very few in number. When I

took the attendance, before starting the lecture, I used to call out the names of all the students on the role including those of the women-students. All of them responded and gave their attendance. Later on I was told that it was not the custom in the College to call out the names of women-students, but even thereafter I continued my practice. No one seemed to resent or raise any objection.

Teaching Logic was fun. The students seemed to enjoy it. It was based on these lectures that I later wrote a textbook on Logic, '*The Fundamentals of Logic*'. One or two of the students became so attached to me that not being content with seeing me in the class-room they would come every evening to my house and spend some time with me. There was a Sanskrit scholar in the town. I took the opportunity of studying an advanced Advaita text with him. Taking advantage of my presence a few of my colleagues organised a Gītā-circle and a Rāmakṛṣṇa Association. They made me address public meetings under the auspices of these Institutions.

A few anecdotes that have stuck to my memory I shall now relate. The main temple in Pudukkottai is dedicated to Devī Bṛhadambā whose temple is partly cut into a cave. At the annual festival the image of the Deity was taken out in a procession. The Rājā walked in front and the Officers of the state had to accompany him including the Staff of the College. All of us had to wear the state dress for the occasion which consisted of a turban, long coat and a cloth tied round the waist. It was a new experience for me. I appreciated the solemnity of the procession.

During my stay in Pudukkottai, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru who was making a tour of the South was to pass through the state according to the programme arranged for him. The British administrator announced that he would prohibit it and would bar the way by placing the small number of the police across the entrance road. Pandit Nehru must have had

a hearty laugh. The plan was abandoned but that evening he was to address a mammoth meeting in Tiruchirappalli. With a few close friends of mine I went to the meeting to listen to the speech. I heard later that this had been taken note of by the authorities.

In March 1937, I was invited by Annamalai University to deliver the Valedictory Address to the Philosophy Association. The subject of my speech was '*The Way of the Spirit*'. A friend from Pudukkottai accompanied me and was responsible for arranging this visit. Then the Vice-Chancellor of the University was the Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri. We had tea with him and he took us for a drive that evening.

Early that calendar year, the Madras University announced that I was qualified for the Ph.D. Degree. In July that year I resigned from Raja's College, as I was invited by Pachaiyappa's College to assume the Headship of the Department of Philosophy.

11

Pachaiyappa's College

Professor P. M. Srinivasachari had become the Principal of that College and I had to take his place in the Department of Philosophy. It was an extremely delicate situation which I had to manage with tact and ingenuity. Most of the members of the Department were my seniors and one of them had been my teacher. It was not difficult for me to establish cordial relations with everyone of them. I made it a point to take a course for the students belonging to every level : Intermediate, B.A., B.A. (Hons.), and M.A. It was my view that the morale of both the students and members of the Staff could be promoted in this way.

Pachaiyappa's College in those days was situated in its old building in George Town. The facade of the hall on the first floor is modelled after Greek architecture. The hall had seen many eminent leaders give public lectures, political, religious, cultural, etc.

For the first three years of my service at the College I taught my classes in this old building. The intermediate classes used to be very big, at times consisting of about two-hundred students. We teachers had to compete with the hawkers below on the side-streets. Due to the zeal and effort

of Professor P. M. Srinivasachari, a new spacious campus in Chetput was acquired from the Government and also funds to put up the necessary buildings. In 1940, the College moved to the new campus. Professor Srinivasachari retired and a new Principal was appointed. I taught at Pachaiyappa's for three more years. The new Principal who had retired from Government Service was an ardent exponent of Hinduism. He introduced the teaching of Hindu religion in the College. His own book on Hinduism was used in the Senior classes. He asked me to write a book which I did for the junior classes. Years later this book became the nucleus of a much larger one which bears the title '*Outlines of Hinduism*'.

Pachaiyappa's College completed its Centenary in 1942. It was born out of a large amount of money left by Pachaiyappa Mudaliar (date 1752-1817), according to a will and last testament written by him before his death, to be used for religious and educational purposes. A special commemoration volume was published on the occasion of the Centenary to which I had to contribute an article on the History of Pachaiyappa's College. For writing this article I had to delve into the archives and read through old documents and thus gather the relevant material. Concluding the article, I express the following hope : 'We leave to the future historians to assess the work of the present management, Principal and members of the staff, when the hour comes for the celebration of the second centenary. They have inherited a glorious tradition from their predecessors who, for a hundred years, have built this great edifice of knowledge with patience, perseverance and foresight. If they will pass on this legacy, with its lustre undiminished, to posterity, they will take their rightful places among the custodians of this sacred Trust. May Pachaiyappa's, the immortal monument to the memory of its illustrious Founder,

march from success to success in its career of spreading the light of knowledge in this land of ancient culture ; and may the celebration of the Centenary be the first of a series of such festivals when the Institution will be crowned with even greater glory and honour.'

As I mentioned earlier, Sri S. S. Suryanarayana Sastri passed away in 1942. I was appointed to succeed him as Head of the Department of Philosophy in 1943. I retired from the University in 1976 when I completed sixty-five years of age. In 1977 The Department celebrated its Golden Jubilee. I was invited to deliver the Golden Jubilee Address, in which I have given an account of the work at the University Department for the previous fifty years. In a later chapter I shall reproduce the Address which will naturally include my work at the Department.

Before I close I want to advert to a phase in my life which relates to a kindly fate that brought me under the protection of the Sage of Kāñcī, His Holiness Jagadguru Śrī Chandraśekharendra Sarasvatī, Śrī Śaṅkarācārya of Kāñcī Kāmakoṭi Pīṭham.

Before I do this in the next Chapter, I should refer to a farewell meeting which my students at Pachaiyappa's got up. They presented me with a poem which I append below :

' Farewell gentle soul! the time has come
For you to leave Pachaiyappa's to Muses dome ;
Here we are to discharge our honest duty,
To pray for your long joyous life and prosperity.

Dear Guru! your task is a kindly one
Your helpful guidance to us very lovingly done ;
We hope to follow wherever you nobly lead ;
" The lives of great men all remind us ", indeed!

The shimmering stars beyond the vault of sky
Too lose their beauteous silvery light and die ;
You pure gem! by your own light you shine
In the Philosophical firmament, the place divine.

All knowledge you chose as your own realm,
Yet more than the unfathomable lake you look calm ;
With holy arts and meditative thoughts you live
To gain wisdom of the One you hopefully strive.

It's golden honour for us to bid you farewell ;
Fare you well in the lively wisdom's dwell ;
We pray for you long life and eternal fame
And for your sovereignty in learning's domain.'

12

The Sage of Kāñcī

Kāñcī is celebrated as one of the seven *mokṣapuris* and is the seat of Devī Kāmākṣī. Ādi Śaṅkara established a *Pīṭha* called Kāmakoṭi Pīṭha in this holy city. He had a *maṭha* set up for himself, and according to our tradition he spent his last days there. The Ācārya who is the sixty-eighth in succession on the Kāmakoṭi, Pīṭha and who, as we saw earlier, was the one who advised Dr. Paul Brunton to go to Tiruvannāmalai and meet Śrī Ramaṇa Maharshi, came to occupy the *Pīṭha* on the 13th of February 1907 under circumstances which took him (he was called Swamanithan then) and his parents by surprise. It was in fulfilment of a sacred duty and in accordance with the wishes of the sixty-sixth Ācārya, that he assumed the most sacred trust left to his successors by Ādi Śaṅkara. He was only thirteen years old then. He lost no time to start preparing himself for the great work that awaited him. Retiring to the banks of the Kāverī, he spent years in study and meditation. He commenced his great tour of our sacred land in March 1919. It was a long and strenuous tour, which was completed in 1939. But it was supremely worthwhile because of the opportunities it gave to people all over the country to meet the

Ācārya and receive his blessings. The Ācārya never uses any of the modern modes of transport. He mostly walks and accepts the use of a palanquin only when absolutely necessary. It was in the course of this *Vijaya-yātrā* that he came to Madras in 1932 and I had the privilege of seeing him for the first time. The citizens of Madras gave a rousing and reverential reception to the Ācārya on the 28th of September 1932. During the four months' stay of the Ācārya in the city the people felt in their life a visible change for the better. In huge numbers they flocked to the camp at the Madras Sanskrit College and later in the different parts of the City and were moved deeply in the elevating presence and by the soul-moving speeches of the Ācārya. On the first night there was a huge and colourful procession terminating at the Sanskrit College. Seated in a decorated palanquin, the Ācārya showered his blessings on the people.

The Navarātrī in 1932 was celebrated at the Sanskrit College. During the *pūjā* festival the Ācārya fasts, observes silence on all the nine days. Women are honoured with offerings of gifts as they are manifestations of *Parāśākti* (the Great Mother of the Universe). And, ceremonial *pūjā* is performed to girls commencing with a two-year old on the first day and ending with a ten-year old on the last day. This is what is known as *Kanyā-pūjā*. Along with recitation of the *Vedas*, *pārāyaṇam* of the *Devī bhāgavata*, the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Gītā* and other texts, the *Caṇḍī* and *Śrī-Vidyā Homas* are performed during the festival. Thousands of people participated in the Navarātrī celebratoins at the Sanskrit College and received the Ācārya's benedictions.

After the Navarātrī, the Ācārya gave discourses every evening after the *pūjā*. Thousands of people would listen to these speeches in absolute silence. As he was seated on the *simhāsana*, he would remain silent for some time. Then, slowly he would commence to speak. It was not just speech,

it was a message from the heart, every time. With simple examples, in a fascinating manner, he would exhort the listeners to lead clean, simple lives which should be unselfish and godly. The essential elements of Hindu *dharma*, the obligatory duties, the most important duty of being devoted to God, the harmony of the Hindu cults, the meaning of the Hindu festivals and institutions, the cultivation of virtues, and the grandeur of Advaita, formed some of the themes of these speeches. Those who for some reason or other were not able to be present during these unforgettable discourses had the food fortune of reading them as reported every day in the 'Hindu' and the 'Swadesamitran'. The Ācārya's teachings enabled the listeners and readers to gain the experience of inward elevation.

Tiruvoṛṛiyūr near Madras is a very holy place. For centuries it has been the favoured resort of *Mahātmās*. The temple of Tyāgeśa and Trīpurasundarī is an ancient one. Ādi Śaṅkara installed the *Śrī Cakra* in this temple. Even today the *arcakas* that officiate at the shrine of the Goddess there are Nambūdiris. There is an image of Śaṅkara in the inner *prakāra* of the temple. Several of the heads of the Kāmakoṭi Pīṭha chose to live at least for some time at Tiruvoṛṛiyūr. In the Śaṅkara Maṭha at that place, the *adhiṣṭhānas* of two Ācāryas of the Kāmakoṭi Pīṭham are to be seen. Our Ācārya visited Tiruvoṛṛiyūr and made the holy place still holier.

It was in 1953 that I met the Ācārya at close quarters in Śivāsthānam near Kāñcī for the first time after his *vijaya-yātrā*. There were a few devotees to whom the Ācārya introduced me. After some time he asked me to go and see a beautiful image of Dakṣiṇāmūrti and also the Śaṅkara panel carved inside the back wall of the *sanctum-sanctorum*. By the time I came back to where His Holiness was, he was explaining to those present the work that was being done at the

University in the area of Advaita. In the same year I went again to Kāñcī along with Svāmī Rājeśvarānanda. The day happened to be the one marking the conclusion of that year's *Cāturmāsya*. We went by car. At a distance we saw a number of devotees going with the Ācārya on *Visvarūpa-yātrā* to the chant of the 11th Chapter of the *Bhagavad-gītā*. I got out of the car and walked for some distance. We spent the night at Viṣṇukāñcī. Early next morning, I went to the Maṭh to have *darśan* of His Holiness. The publisher of *Kāmakoṭi Kośasthānam* publications happened to be there as also an artist of Ādi Śaṅkara illustrations for books. His Holiness introduced me to them and also showed me some of the paintings of the artist. Then he said, 'We are completing sixty years of the Advaita Sabhā (the Sabhā was started in 1894 by the sixty-sixth Ācārya). To mark the occasion it is planned to publish sixty Advaita books.' He added, 'So long as there is *bahirmukhadṛṣṭi* (out-turned attention) I want to do things of this sort.' It is evident that he said this from *our* point of view. So far as the Sage is concerned, there is no distinction of 'outer' and 'inner'.

The Ācārya wanted to select a successor to the Kāñcī Kāmakoṭi Pīṭha, and train him for the enormous tasks and obligations associated with the headship of the Pīṭha. His choice fell on a young disciple, Subrahmaṇyam by name, who was the son of Śrī Mahādeva Aiyar, an official of the Southern Railway at Tiruchi. From his early childhood Subrahmaṇyam had been receiving Vedic education at the Maṭha itself. He was about nineteen years old in 1954. The Vedic rituals associated with initiating him into *sannyāsa* and imparting to him the *mahāvākya-upadeśa* by the Ācārya took place at Kāñcī from the 19th to the 22nd March 1954. Thousands of people had assembled there to witness the unique ceremony on the 22nd of March. The young disciple stood hip-deep in the Sarvatīrtha Tank. As soon as the Ācārya arrived at

the place, the young man discarded the insignia and attire of the lay person. Then he donned the *kāṣāya* cloth and repaired to the shrine of Śrī Viśveśvara. It was there that the Ācārya imparted to him the *mahā-vākya-upadeśa*. He was given the *yoga-paṭṭam*, Śrī Jayendra Sarasvatī.

The Golden Jubilee of the Ācārya's ascension to the Kāmakoṭi Pīṭha was celebrated on the 17th of March 1957, at Kalavai, the place where he had ascended the Pīṭha in 1907. In the course of a message, the Ācārya observed :

'We know today that half-a-century has passed. There is not much use in reviewing all that we have been able to do in the past fifty years. On the contrary, we should bestow our thoughts on what we have to do in the remaining years that are given to us by God in this life. What is it that has to be done by us ? What has to be done is to gain the state of freedom from all action. But, in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, the Lord declares repeatedly that the state of freedom from action cannot be obtained by remaining quiet (without performing our duty). It is by performing action that the state of actionlessness can be realised. What is that action which is very intense by which actionlessness is to be achieved by us ? In answering this question we recollect and remind you of the Bhagavatpāda's command : "Let action be performed well ; thus let God be worshipped ! Let us then perform our allotted actions. It is the performance of allotted actions that constitutes service to the Lord, worship of Him and becomes the means to obtain His Grace. Therefore, performing our respective duties and thus worshipping the Lord, we shall gain the Supreme Good.'

To mark the glorious occasion I had the good fortune of editing a Festschrift bearing the title '*The Perceptors of Advaita*'. I am taking the privilege of quoting from my preface to the Volume for the purpose of indicating its scope and significance.

'In the history of Advaita after Ādi Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda, it is a unique and rare event that is being commemorated by the publication of this Volume—the Diamond Jubilee of the ascension to the Śrī Kāmakoṭi Pīṭha by His Holiness Jagadguru Śrī Chandraśekharendra Sarasvatī, Śrī Śaṅkarācārya of Kāñcī. For sixty years the Ācārya has adorned the Holy Seat founded by Śrī Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda, making its lustre spread far and wide and bringing solace to innumerable seekers all the world over. The present Volume is a collective offering made to the Jagadguru by His devotees, as a humble token of their ineffable gratitude, veneration, and love, on the auspicious occasion of the Diamond Jubilee.

Advaita, which is the Plenary Experience, is not a system among systems of philosophy or a cult among the cults of religion. It has been taught by great preceptors from time immemorial as the culmination and goal of all philosophical schools and religious persuasions. The Advaita tradition traces its inspiration to God Himself—as Śrīman Nārāyaṇa or as Sadā-Śiva. The Supreme Lord revealed the wisdom of Advaita to Brahmā, the Creator, who in turn imparted it to Vaśiṣṭha. This wisdom was handed down at first as *vaṁsa-paraṁparā*, i.e. from father to son, in succession. With Śuka and Gauḍapāda commenced the *śiṣya-paraṁparā*, i.e. the line of succession from preceptor to disciple. Śaṅkara, an *avatāra* of Śiva, was the greatest consolidator of Advaita : his penetrating and lucid commentaries on the three *prasthānas*, viz., the *Upaniṣads* the *Bhagavad-gītā*, and the *Brahma-sūtra*, have been acclaimed as master-pieces of Vedāntic literature. The teachers of Advaita who came after him have expounded the Upaniṣadic teaching in numerous works. In the present Volume, there are articles contributed by various scholars on the Preceptors of Advaita belonging to the three periods into which the history of Advaita falls : (1) that of pre-Śaṅkara teachers, beginning

with Vaśiṣṭha, (2) that of Śaṅkara and his immediate disciples, and (3) that of post-Śaṅkara exponents of Advaita. The fifty-six articles cover sixty Preceptors of Advaita; it will be seen that not only philosophers but also poets, literary writers, and exponents in some of the regional languages have been included here. Articles 57, 58, and 59 are devoted to Śaṅkarite Institutions, Kāmākṣī and Kāmakoṭi, and the Kāmakoṭi Pīṭha respectively. The sixtieth article presents a brief life-sketch of His Holiness Jagadguru Śrī Chandraśekharendra Sarasvatī, the Sage of Kāñcī, the Diamond Jubilee of whose *Pīṭhārohaṇa* this Volume commemorates. In the last article, the sixty-first, are given English translations of two of His Holiness's discourses—(1) On Advaita, and (2) On the Significance of Śaṅkara Jayanti.'

It was a unique good fortune of the city of Madras to receive the Ācārya in 1957 after a lapse of 25 years, this time accompanied by his principal Disciple and Successor, His Holiness, Śrī Jayendra Sarasvatī. From 1957 to 1959 the Ācāryas stayed in the city. The citizens basked in the benign presence of His Holiness, participated in the daily *pūjā* performed to Śrī Chandramaulīśvara and Śrī Tripurasundarī and listened to his after-*pūjā* discourses. Thousands of devotees felt ennobled by this divine experience. To watch the Ācārya perform the *pūjā* was itself a unique participation in the adoration of the Divine. After the evening *pūjā*, the *Ācārya* would come to the platform and sit there for a while in silence. It reminded one of Śrī Dakṣiṇāmūrti whose way of teaching is silence. But, so as to bless those of us who cannot understand the language of silence, the *Ācārya* would begin to speak after preparing the ground through silence. Effortlessly would his speech flow, without the least trace of artificiality. Into his speeches he would pour the most ancient wisdom as also the latest results of the most recent research in a variety of disciplines. Above all, every word of

the Ācārya's statements would have as its support authentic inward experience. The entire audience would sit spell-bound, absorbing every syllable and accent and their deep significance.

Here is what some papers reported while giving the gist of the Ācārya's teachings :

'True to the appellation Jagadguru (World Teacher), the Ācārya's teachings are meant for the entire mankind. Even when they are addressed to the Hindus they are applicable *mutatis mutandis* to the followers of other faiths. Advaita, has no quarrel with any religion or spiritual perspective. No one is excluded from its portals. The plenary experience which is Advaita is the common goal for everyone. Inheriting this most comprehensive outlook as the Ācārya does, he finds no difficulty in accommodating apparently divergent points of view and elevating them at the same time with the lever of Advaita experience.'

'Advaita is not a school among schools of thought. As the Ācārya says, sages belonging to different traditions and religions have had the Advaita-experience ; and they have shared their experience with others. Tattvarāya Svāmī was a Mādhva ; Mastān Sāheb was a Muslim. Even those thinkers who profess to oppose Advaita turn out to be contributors thereto ; and all of them speak the language of Advaita. This shows that the expansive heart of Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara accommodates all views on the Ultimate Reality and all approaches to it. Though other systems may quarrel with Advaita, Advaita does not quarrel with them.'

'It is in the context of Advaita that the Ācārya's varied teachings fall in place. His exhortation for work for the commonweal, his advice for the adoption of simple and clean modes of living, his repeated invitation for offering worship to God in any one of His myriad forms, his recommendation of the practice of concentration and meditation, his advocacy

of the study of Vedānta and the realisation of its truth—all these are to be understood as relating to disciplines that lead to Advaita experience.'

'There is an unfounded criticism that Advaita accords no place to God in its scheme. The truth, however, is that even the Advaita outlook one gains only through the Grace of God. There is nothing strange, therefore, in the Ācārya's teaching, through example and precept, that the most important item in one's daily programme should be divine worship. Those moments in one's life are vain which are unrelated to the endeavour to bespeak the blessings of the Lord.'

'As a spiritual discipline, the worship of one's chosen form of the Deity is indispensable for one's progress towards enlightenment. Especially at the initial stages it serves as the go-cart which helps the child to learn to walk. While praying one may ask for the fulfilment of one's own personal ends; but the best prayer is that which asks God to dower the entire world with His blessings; for, the devotee of the Lord should look upon all mankind as one.'

'A theme which recurs frequently in the Ācārya's speeches is the plea for inter-religious understanding. There is no meaning in the rivalries between the followers of the different faiths. The attempts at religious conversion are like those of the drivers of all sorts of conveyances at the railway station to "catch" passengers. While the behaviour of the drivers is understandable, that of the protagonists of religions is meaningless. As the God of all religious denominations is one, there is no need to give up one religion and adopt another. This does not mean that all the religions are uniform; uniformity is not important; what is important is unity; and all our faiths are united in proclaiming the supreme reality of the One God. The religions are like the arches of a bridge. To a man standing under a particular

arch, that one would loom large and the others would appear small. But the fact is that all arches are similarly constructed and are of the same dimension. As God cannot be different, why should there be decrying of any religion? The religions are many only to cater to the different tastes of men. This should not lead to religious fanaticism and hatred.'

'The grandeur of Hinduism is that it consciously recognises the unity of religions. That the different religions are not contradictory of, or antagonistic to one another, but are only aspects of one Eternal Religion, is not a mere theory or abstract speculation with the Hindus; it is an article of faith. It is a tragedy, therefore, that there should be religious quarrels among the Hindus themselves. A major division in Hinduism is that between Vaiṣṇavism and Śaivism. The Ācārya is never tired of pointing out that, according to all our Scriptures and the teachings of all the great masters, Śiva and Viṣṇu are one. Our ancients have taught us in several ways the unity of God-head. The conceptions of Natarāja and Raṅgarāja are complementary to each other. In fact, Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva are but different aspects of the same Deity. A similar complementariness is to be noticed in the idea of God as male and female, as father and mother. The integrated views of the Deity as *Harihara* and as *Ardhanārīśvara*, have a deep significance, and take us nearer the supreme truth.'

'A resurgent and strong Hinduism is necessary not only for the salvation of the Hindus but also for the betterment of the world. The Veda which is the basic scripture of Hinduism is not a sectarian text. Whatever truth was declared by any great prophet can be traced to the Vedas. On the river-banks of the Vedic *dharma*, the various religions are like the bathing ghats. In the distant past, the Vedic religion was spread throughout the world. Gradually other

religions appeared in other parts of the globe, each emphasizing some aspects of the religion of the Veda. To India belongs the privilege of preserving the ancient *dharma* in its purity and comprehensive nature.'

'A disciplined and ordered life is what is taught in the Veda. The main Vedic disciplines are: performance of one's duties (*karamānuṣthāna*), cultivation of the cardinal virtues (*śīla*) worship of the Deity (upāsanā) and acquisition of wisdom (*jñāna*). To live like an animal, eating, sleeping and begetting, is to prostitute the precious human birth. We must learn to put a curb on the animal propensities, and purify our minds. By good deeds we must convert the material goods into religious merit (*puṇya*) which alone is legal tender in the worlds to come. Earning and hoarding should not become the ends of life. A career-oriented education is no education. What should first be inculcated in young minds is respect for *dharma*. There is no point in asking people to increase their standard of living; what should be aimed at is improvement of the quality of life. The frail mortal cannot improve his life by self-effort alone; he must seek God's Grace through worship and meditation. It is by bathing in the holy waters of meditation that the mind gets cleansed of its impurities. The mind so cleansed develops the power of discrimination; it gains the ability to distinguish the real from the unreal, which paves the way for the dawn of wisdom (*jñāna*).'

'*Jñāna* is the fruit of the tree of life. The man of wisdom, the sage, is the ideal of man. He has no attachment and aversion; praise and blame are equal to him. He does not sink under the weight of so-called troubles. A heavy log of wood becomes light when immersed in water. Let the troubles be sunk in the waters of *jñāna*, they will cease to be troubles. To the *jñānī*, the supreme Self is the sole reality. As the dolls in the Daśarā exhibition are all clay in their

insides, so are all things the Paramātman in substance for the *jñānī*. There is no bondage for the *jñānī* ; he does not fall again into the tract of *samsāra*. *Mokṣa* or realease is not a *post mortem* state ; it is the eternal nature of the Self. The *jñānī* realises this ; and hence there is no more travail for him. The *Trayambaka-mantra* compares release to the separation of the cucumber fruit from its stalk. This fruit does not fall down, but gets detached from the stalk or rather, the stalk gets itself detached even wihout the fruit knowing it. This "cucumber mukti" is the goal of everyone. Those who have realised it are the *jñānīs*.'

' Such *jñānīs* have appeared at all times and in all places. Their presence is a blessing to the world. Thousands of people profit, even without their knowing, by contact with a *Mahāpuruṣa*. There is no discord or divergence of views among the wise. The peace that passeth understanding is what they spread. Let the people resort to them for gaining liberation from the fetters of finite existence.'

While the Ācārya was staying in Kāñcī in 1953-57, his second visit to the city, 1957-59, and in subsequent years, several foreigners—scholars and savants, spiritual seekers and religious leaders, exponents of the arts and even diplomats —have had interviews with him, thereby gaining first hand knowledge of the immortal tradition of our country. This is what Professor Milton Singer, of the University of Chicago, said after his meeting with the Ācārya in 1955 ; it expresses precisely the feeling of all those from abroad who have had the good fortune of conversing with the Great One : ' Before I went to India I had heard and read much about the great " soul force " of its holy men and saints, but I had assumed that this was something in the ancient past. And it was not until I had met Śaṅkarācārya that I realised it was still a part of the living force of Hinduism today.' In his book

The Lotus and the Robot, the well-known writer, Mr. Arthur Köstler, records his impressions of a meeting which he had with His Holiness in 1959, and speaks in glowing terms of the smile that transformed the Ācārya's face into that of a child : 'I had never seen a comparable smile or expression ; it had an extraordinary charm and sweetness.'

Of the several friends from other countries whom I had the honour to take to the Ācārya I shall mention here only two and give an account of what took place at the interview, as it is a typical illustration of such meetings. The date was the 26th of February 1958 and the time 9 p.m. Sir Paul Dukes arrived at His Holiness's camp at Thyagarayanagar at 8.30 p.m. He was shown to the place of the audience, which was an open space beneath a row of palm-trees. There had been spread hay whereon in the centre was put a wooden plank which was to serve as the seat for the Ācārya. Amazed by this, for him, unusual situation, Sir Paul remarked that this was a romantic setting for the experience which he was looking forward to. Soon, the Frenchman, Mr. Philippe Lavastine, arrived accompanied by a few Indian friends. He seemed obviously moved at the prospect of meeting a great scholar-saint.

It was a little past nine. Our attention was drawn to the direction from where a mild torchlight flashed. The Ācārya was coming slowly, with those unselfconscious steps which are uniquely his. About six devotees who were following him stepped back, as he sat on the wooden plank asking the small gathering that had been waiting for him, to sit down, by a graceful gesture of the hand. The two foreigners sat at a short distance from His Holiness, with me in between them. The interview was about to begin.

Sir Paul Dukes was the first to be introduced, as the author of two books entitled *The Unending Quest*, and *Yoga for the Western World*. His Holiness asked Sir Paul as to what

he meant by unending quest. The Englishman answered that in his own case the quest had not yet ended. He added that in the case of the average Westerner it is thought that the quest ends once a particular church was accepted. Sir Paul's view was that this was not so. Explaining the meaning of the *unending quest*, the Sage observed : 'If the quest is external, there would be no end to it. It would be like the quest for the horizon—a hallucination. If the quest is inward, then it would end with the discovery of the true Self. In a sense, even this latter quest may be said to be unending in that its object is infinite.'

The Frenchman was then introduced as one who was interested in the study of our temples and the *Purāṇas* in connection with his researches into the institution of kingship. M. Lavastine explained his central problem himself. In ancient times the temporal as also the spiritual were united in the institution of kingship. There was no division of the secular from the sacred. Probably, most of the ills of the modern world are traceable to this division which is now the case. The French Scholar thought that a study of the history of the South Indian temples might throw light on the question of the relation between temporal power and spirituality.

His Holiness asked if M. Lavastine had heard of the saying *rājā dharmasya kāraṇam* (The King is responsible for *dharma*). As His Holiness was giving an illuminating explanation of this saying, the two visitors were observed to be moving close to him, with their attention fixed on every word of his. Although His Holiness was speaking in Tamil, he used a profusion of English words to help the interpretation and also the visitors in understanding him. The Westerners were not accustomed to squatting crosslegged ; so they started stretching their legs forwards, not knowing our custom. I touched the knees of the Frenchman, in order to

indicate he could fold his legs. Observing this, His Holiness said that there was no need for restraint. It was difficult for the average Westerner to squat. The way in which the visitors sat did not matter. They were like children in this respect. Why restrain them? How gracious of the Sage to have made this observation! Is this tolerance not a true sign of a Mahātmā?

'What would be the message from His Holiness that could be carried to the West?' was a request from Sir Paul Dukes. His Holiness remained silent for a considerable length of time. He was withdrawn with eyes half-closed, and absorbed in contemplation. Then he spoke in slow measured tones: 'In all that you do, let love be the sole motive. Any deed must be with reference to another. Action implies the acted-upon as much as the agent. Let action be out of love. I am not here referring to the Gandhian gospel of *ahiṁsā*. There may be situations which demand violent action. Punishment, for instance, may be necessary. Even wars may have to be waged. But whatever be the nature of the action, the agent must act out of love. Passions such as desire and hatred, anger and malice must be totally eschewed. If love becomes the guiding principle of all deeds, then most of the ills of the world will vanish.' 'This', added His Holiness, 'you may carry with you as the message of the sages and saints of India.'

In this way ended an unforgettable interview with one who is the embodiment of all that is most noble and sublime in the spiritual culture of India. Enjoying the fragrance of the virtues and courtesy and especially the tenderness expressed by the Pontiff, one could see the light of wisdom beaming forth from those enchanting eyes, as one listened to words which were true and at the same time pleasing.

I should like to conclude this chapter with a brief reference to the historical meeting that took place between His Holi-

ness and Mahātmā Gandhi in 1927 near Palghat. Nobody knew what the two great ones spoke about. In November 1968 we organised at the University a Seminar on the *Relevance of Mahātmā Gandhi to the World of Thought*. I requested His Holiness for a message. Out of his abundant grace the *Jagadguru*, the Preceptor of the World, sent a message in which he recalled the meeting with Gandhiji, the Father of the Nation, and paid the following tribute :

'We wish to place before this Seminar one of the many things which Gandhiji and we discussed when we met at Palghat in Kerala in the last *Prabhava* year. Before Gandhiji arrived at Palghat, there came the news of the assassination of Śraddhānanda of the Ārya Samāj. Referring to this incident Gandhiji remarked as follows :

'I have an apprehension in my mind that assassinations of this kind would occur more often than now in the coming years. Let not there arise in me hatred even in a small measure against the present assassin. There arises a desire in me that I should be able to embrace with love even so cruel a man who commits a heinous crime, as this one, an *ātatāyin*. But it is extremely difficult to cultivate such heartfelt affection. Yet I shall make an honest attempt in this direction.'

'All that we wish to point out is that in this world it is very rare to hear such a feeling expressed.'

13

Fifty Years of Philosophy

As I have already stated, I joined the University Department of Philosophy in 1943 and retired in 1976. The next year 1977, the Department celebrated its Golden Jubilee. I was invited to participate in the Celebration and deliver the Jubilee Address. It will be noted that I entered the Department as a Research student in 1933, *i.e.*, six years after its inception and have been connected with its fortunes in one way or another till my retirement—even during the eight years from 1935 to 1943, when I was attached to Pudukkottai Raja's College for two years and Pachaiyappa's for the subsequent six. This is what I said on the occasion.

The history of University education in India has its bright as well as dark sides. While our scholars came to be exposed to Western classics and advancements in science and technology, they were taught to despise their own cultural heritage. The circumstances under which and the purposes for which the three Universities of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras were founded in 1857 were such that the youth that were educated at these centres became aliens in their own country. Svāmī Vivekānanda, who was himself a brilliant product of the University of Calcutta in the last century,

made a scathing criticism of the educational system in these words : ' A negative education of any training that is given to negation, is worse than death. The child is taken to school, and the first thing he learns is that his father is a fool, the second thing that his grandfather is a lunatic, and the third thing that all his teachers are hypocrites, the fourth, that all the sacred books are lies ! By the time he is sixteen he is a mass of negation, lifeless and boneless. And the result is, that fifty years of such education has not produced one original man in the three Presidencies. Every man of originality that has been produced has been educated elsewhere, and not in this country, or they have gone to the old universities once more to cleanse themselves of superstitions.' It was not that British education that was taken as the model was at fault; what was at fault was that it was ill-adapted, ignoring the genius of Indian culture. What was placed as the objective before the student was not the vision of excellence but examination-passing as the passport to employment. Education had thus become a mechanical process of information-feeding and memory-reproducing, without affording any incentive for originality. Critics were not slow to point out in the last century itself that Indian Universities were functioning merely as affiliating and examining bodies, neglecting the promotion of research and the furtherance of knowledge. It was for obviating such criticism that University Research Departments came into existence.

At the University of Madras, provision was made for creating a Chair of Indian History and Archaeology along with those of Comparative Philology and of Indian Economics, by utilising the special grant of Rs. 65,000 bestowed on the University in 1912. The institution of a Department of Philosophy had to wait until the year 1927, when a Readership was created ' with a special object of promoting

the study of South Indian Thought'. Professor S. S. Suryanarayana Sastri was appointed Reader in the new Department ; and he assumed charge on the 1st September 1927.

The Department was housed in ' Thambu Villa ', Pantheon Road, in convenient proximity to the Connemara Library, the Oriental Manuscripts Library, and the Government Records Office. On the 1st of October 1929, it was shifted to ' Limbdi Gardens ', Royapettah, where it functioned till it was moved to the new University buildings on the Marina, adjoining the River Coovum, in July 1936. The upgrading of the Department into a Centre of Advanced Study necessitated the allotment of larger space : this was provided when the Centenary Buildings were completed and some of the Research Departments along with the Administrative Offices were located in them.

In his inaugural address delivered on March 12, 1928, Professor Suryanarayana Sastri observed that though there is no gain-saying the fact that South India has been the home of subtle philosophies and great religions (and it might be even claimed that the best Indian Philosophy is South Indian), the Reader, consequent on the terms of the foundation, must be careful to avoid the extremes of parochialism. ' Philosophical conquests have for us no meaning ', he said, ' except in so far as a less comprehensive theory is included and transcended in a more comprehensive and more harmonious one'.

The principle to be followed in research in Indian Philosophy was formulated by Professor Sastri thus : Our guiding factor in that study must be the desire to discover and grasp the fundamental principles of the Philosophy and Culture it is connected with, a desire which cannot continue in its purity so long as it is affected by considerations of the need for justifying our ways to the outsider or making them appeal to him.... Our primary and perhaps only justification must

therefore be the need to consolidate our own intellectual heritage with a view to understand and regulate better the lives which have been guided by it all these centuries. One has necessarily to consider the influence thereon of foreign elements impinging on it for good or bad; but this is very different from studying it for the purpose of justifying it to the inheritors of another culture.'

In the inaugural address I have just quoted from, Professor Sastri defines the scope of research in Indian philosophy thus: 'To gather the old material and enrich it with the new is a stupenduous task awaiting the earnest and patient worker.' It was to this task that he addressed himself for the rest of his life; and it is remarkable that he accomplished so much in so short a time.

Professor Suryanarayana Sastri's contribution to Indian Philosophy is both profound and extensive. The first few years he devoted to a study of the school of Śaivism known as Śivādvaita as expounded by Śrīkaṇṭha Śivācārya. He wrote a book on this system, and also edited with an English translation the *Śivādvaitanirṇaya* of Appayya Dīkṣita. He was also interested in two other schools of Śaivism, viz., Śaiva Siddhānta and Pratyabhijñā. A careful study of these Śaiva Schools based on the Āgamas led him to the conclusion that Advaita Vedānta was the fulfilment of Āgamānta.

It was in the field of Advaita that the major part of Professor Sastri's work as University Reader lay. His Oxford thesis on 'Bradley and Śaṅkara' had already prepared him for this work. As he himself confesses in his Miller Lectures, his faith in Advaita was not a matter of inheritance, but the result of conviction. This is what he says: 'I was not born in an Advaita tradition; nor did my early philosophic training impart a leaning towards Advaita. In so far as I had any pronounced views in the early days, they were fashioned under the influence of James and Schiller; the Advaitain's

Brahman and the Bradleyan Absolute were alike anathema. Even when at a later date knowledge of Absolutism took the place of ignorance and prejudice, my conscientious tutor Emeritus Professor Joachim was so insistent on putting up the opposite view that my conversion to Absolute Idealism was neither quick nor easy. And not till a detailed study of Advaita in recent years did I acquire anything like an intellectual conviction as to that system. I can therefore quite honestly persuade myself that I have not been rushed into this system which has claimed my final acceptance after a period of over two decades. The acceptance of it has not been due to preconceptions, prejudices, early influences, or intellectual indolence.'

Professor Sastri's study of Advaita literature was extensive. His own publications in this field, consisting mainly of editions and translations are a considerable lot. Among his editions and translations may be mentioned : the *Bhāmatī Catussūtri* (1933), the *Siddhāntaleśa-Saṅgraha* (1935 and 1937), and the *Vivaraṇaprameya-saṅgraha* (1942).

After the editions and translations of Advaita classics, Professor Sastri planned to write an exposition of 'the Fundamentals of Advaita'; but he could complete writing only the first chapter of this work. In the numerous articles that he contributed from time to time to learned journals and conferences, however, he has defined in a fairly full manner his conception of Advaita, which has remarkable features of its own and can therefore take its legitimate place in the history of the developments of post-Śaṅkara Advaita.

Of the two main traditions of post-Śaṅkara Advaita, the *Vivaraṇa* and the *Bhāmatī*, it was the latter that had a greater appeal to Professor Sastri. Vācaspati Miśra who wrote the commentary Bhāmati on Śaṅkara's *Brahma-sūtra-bhāṣya*, was profoundly influenced by Maṇḍana who was a contemporary of Śaṅkara and who taught a different type

of Advaita. Maṇḍana, the author of the *Brahmasiddhi*, was not the Mīmāṁsaka,—who probably bore the same name,—whom Śaṅkara converted and who became Sureśvara. The school of Vācaspati, although it professes to follow Śaṅkara, nevertheless borrowed profusely from Maṇḍana's teachings. As Professor Sastri says, 'Whatever is distinctive in Vācaspati's Advaita teaching is inherited by him from Maṇḍana.' And, Professor Sastri's greater liking for the *Bhāmati-prasthāna* was for the very reason that it leans heavily on Maṇḍana's Advaita. Maṇḍana rather than Śaṅkara, was Professor Sastri's ideal. Professor Sastri considers Maṇḍana to be a 'truer Advaitin,' the 'foremost among integrative Advaitins', 'one of the greatest of Advaita writers', 'a shining light'. What drew Professor Sastri to Maṇḍana most was the latter's teaching that 'unity instead of residing in a transcendent sphere informs and enlivens all aspects of this empirical multiverse.' The success of Maṇḍana in this line of thought Professor Sastri attributes to his combination of Advaita with the householder's *āśrama*.

Professor Sastri contrasts the 'thoughtful', 'wise', 'integrative' Advaita with the 'orthodox', 'traditional', 'average' Advaita. The most important feature of the former type of Advaita is the continuity, stressed by Maṇḍana, between the *vyāvahārika* and the *pāraṃārthika*, the empirical and the absolute. Śaṅkara-Advaita, so Professor Sastri feels, tends to ignore and under-rate the value of the *vyāvahārika*; its 'lordly indifference' to *vyavahāra* has resulted in the neglect of the affairs of the world such as ethics and politics. While the causal concept does not apply to the transcendental world, it holds, there is absolute causal rigidity in the empirical world. Thus, according to the traditional Advaita, there is a hiatus between the empirical and the transcendental, between the world of *māyā* and *Brahman*. Professor Sastri is averse to this cleavage. For

him 'the finite is not a plane or sphere apart from the infinite; it is the infinite itself which expresses itself in finitude.' 'There are not two realms, those of *vyavahāra* and *paramārtha*; there is only one reality—the *paramārtha*, of which the *vyāvahārika* is a section and semblance.' From the empirical to the absolute there is not a discontinuous jump but a continuous progression.

The negative attitude, according to Professor Sastri, has no intrinsic value. The dominance of negation in Advaita is probably a *hereditas damnosa* from the Mādhyamika dialectic. This may also be due to the uncritical adoption of the Bhāṭṭa way in matters empirical, *vyavahāre-bhaṭṭa-nayaḥ* Professor Sastri is convinced that the wiser course for the Advaitin would be to follow the Prabhākara for whom negation is secondary. It is true that the negative mode is adopted for indicating the nature of the Absolute. But the Absolute on that account is not characterless. *Brahman* has no characteristics; it is not that it has no character. *Brahman* is indeterminable, not indeterminate.

Śaṅkara and those who follow him—strangely, even Vācaspati—reject *sphoṭa-vāda*. According to this theory advocated by Maṇḍana following the Grammarians, the individual cognitions of letters are parts, as it were, of the inspiring whole, *sphoṭa*, which is really partless. Such a theory must be welcome to the Advaitin whose *Brahman* is partless and is not compounded of appearances. Unfortunately the traditional Advaitin, following the wrong lead of the Bhāṭṭa-Mīmāṁsaka, adopts a doctrine of meaning which is psychologically defective and needlessly criticises *sphoṭa-vāda* which, as shown by Maṇḍana, is in comformity with and an aid to the comprehension of Advaita. *Sphoṭa-vāda* deserves every support both from the standpoint of dynamic psychology and that of absolute metaphysics.

Maṇḍana is wrongly accused by some as holding a view known as *Bhāvādvaita*. According to this view, negation is real, but the reality of negation is not inconsistent with non-dualism. The sole positive reality is *Brahman*. This is not affected by the admission of the reality of the universe. Such a view fails to note the purely secondary function of negation. Maṇḍana does not hold this view. He does not treat *prapañcavāda* as an irreducible negative reality alongside the absolute *Brahman*. All that he does say is that 'even of one and the same entity there is verbal usage both as existent and non-existent (*i.e.*, positive and negative).' That is, both existence and non-existence are phases of the real. This view is by no means *Bhāvādvaita*. The ascription of *Bhāvādvaita* to Maṇḍana must have been the result of a confusion in the minds of the critics between reality (*sat*) and existence (*bhāva*).

It is well known that, according to Śaṅkara, knowledge (*jñāna*) is the sole means to release (*mokṣa*). The reason that is given for this view is that without the destruction of nescience (*avidyā*) release is impossible and knowledge alone can destroy nescience. Professor Sastri sees no justification for this doctrine, and thinks that its advocacy reveals (1) an intellectual bias, (2) a defective psychology compartmentalising cognition, conation, and emotion and (3) possibly an escapist mentality engendered by conditions of life in general and by an excessive ritualism.

When it is stated that *jñāna* is the sole means to release, what is meant by the expression '*jñāna*', Professor Sastri would ask. If by *jñāna* is meant *svarūpa-jñāna*, then that is the end, and not the means. If the term means *vṛtti-jñāna*, what is the process by which this *jñāna* effects release? It is generally held that the process by which it effects release is destruction of the lower *vṛittis*. But this is not consistent with the Advaitin's view of *avidyā* as a positive entity. So,

Professor Sastri would suggest that what happens in release is the sublimation of ignorance into knowledge. If the cognitive sublimation could be a means, there is no reason why that status should be denied to the conative and emotive aspects of man's being. 'Realisation is not the monopoly of any class nor of any mode', says Professor Sastri, 'It may come through spiritual analysis or through the melting of the heart in devotion or through self-surrender in service....The melting of the heart in love is no less noble than the expansion of it in wisdom; and the transcendence of the gulf between *kartṛ* and *karma* in action is not less noteworthy than the transcendence of that between the seer and seen in knowledge. The unity appears in and breaks through the multiplicity every moment in emotion and volition no less than in intellection. One of those is not more sacrosanct than the others. And the philosophy of non-dualism should look for integrative synthesis rather than intellectual dominance.'

It is held in Advaita that truth sublates error, the noumenal sublates the phenomenal. And by sublation what is meant is destruction. With this view of sublation Professor Sastri does not agree. What he means by sublation is 'not destruction but control by a large whole and a transformation into the substance of that whole'. This is what happens when delusions and dreams are sublated. The lower is taken up in the higher and transformed. Traditional Advaita lands itself in difficulty by thinking of the sublater and the sublated as barely opposed, *svarūpa-jñāna* does not sublate, according to it, because it is the locus of nescience. The final intuition or *sākṣātkāra* which is a *vṛtti-jñāna* sublates, *i.e.*, destroys the empirically valid. The objection to such a view would be that there is no uniform principle. *Sākṣātkāra* destroys the lower grades of *avidyā*. But how is that destroyed? The traditional Advaitin would say that it

commits suicide. This is rather unintelligible. The usual analogies given—goat's milk digesting other milk and itself being digested, poison dispelling other poison and dispelling itself, the powder of the clearing-nut precipitating other dust in water and precipitating itself—do not really explain. The difficulty is due to conceiving sublation as destruction. There is no difference in principle between the transcendence of ignorance in *vṛtti-jñāna* and the transcendence of the latter in *svarūpa-jñāna*. Sublation is thus a process of transcendence or sublimation, mastery of the lower by the higher.

Traditional Advaita draws a distinction between *jīvanmukti* and *videhamukti*. Professor Sastri found no use for this distinction. *Jīvanmukti* is the only legitimate concept, according to him, for those who believe in release through the dawn of wisdom. Both the Advaitin and Sāṅkhya, it is true, believe in such a release. But there is a difference. According to the Sāṅkhya, knowledge destroys ignorance but not *Prakṛti*. It is only when *Prakṛti* desists from evolution that there is physical decease, that full release is had. Holding rigidly to the causal concept, the Sāṅkhya cannot but maintain that the effect persists as long as the cause persists. At the same time, he has to recognise that since knowledge could come before physical death, release need not wait till there is physical decease. So he postulates two *muktis—jīvanmukti* and *videhamukti*, the former to escape the logical difficulty of the co-existence of knowledge and ignorance, and the latter in order to be consistent with his view of the causuality of *prakṛti*. But the Advaitin need not follow the Sāṅkhya in this matter. For, according to him, spirit is not seer but sight. The non-spirit is superimposed on account of nescience which is both the cause and the stuff of the superimposition. Knowledge removes both. The physical body may continue to appear, but that

is no bar to release. For, it is the mastery of the non-self that constitutes release, not its dissolution. It cannot be said that the persistence of the body is due to the persistence of its cause, *viz*, *karma* which perishes only at decease ; for the Advaitin is not bound to support a rigid application of the causal concept. The traditional Advaitin overlooked this and allowed himself to be led by Sāṅkhya concepts. Hence his postulation of a *videhamukti* over and above *jīvan-mukti*. Certain scriptural passages, superficially understood, seem to support him in this. But it is not impossible to interpret these texts as teaching only one kind of *mukti*. The Advaitin's belief in *videhamukti* is a legacy from the Sāṅkhya—a legacy which should be renounced, as it has served to confuse adherents and opponents alike, standing in the way of a clear appreciation of Advaita.

The concept of *sarva-mukti* had a great fascination for Professor Sastri. If one grants that there are many *jīvas* empirically speaking—and Professor Sastri was convinced that this must be granted—then it follows that the Advaitin should grant equality of opportunity for all *jīvas*, in the sense that release is possible and inevitable for all of them, sooner or later, and that his own release cannot be absolute until that consummation. Appayya Dīkṣita maintained this view according to which an individual when released gains identity with Īśvara and not with *Brahman* which latter is realised only at the end when all become perfect. So, till the attainment of universal release, the perfection of a sage and saint is relative, as that means only the attainment of *Īśvaratva*. This being so, 'there is a special value to be attached to the performance of *karma* by the man of wisdom, for while wisdom illumines the wise man alone, action lightens the load and smoothens the path of the ignorant as well ; the perfecting of the latter is accelerated, thus bringing nearer the making absolute of the *mukta's* relative

perfection, the *Brāhmī-bhāva* of him who has but attained *Īśvara-bhāva.*

Professor Sastri believed that the concept of *sarva-mukti* came to Advaita originally from Buddhism, and he was eager that this should be conserved and cherished. 'If Advaita is to be a live force', he declares with great fervour, 'it must be by the open espousal of this doctrine together with its necessary corollary of service to society. And this will give it fresh vigour and wider appeal. And when it believes in its successes, it should remember its indebtedness to its one-time powerful rival, the teaching of the Buddha.'

While it is true that Professor Sastri differed from Śaṅkara in regard to certain details of the Advaita teaching, it is also true that he was second to none in his admiration for and devotion to the great Master. After pointing out in his booklet on the *Life and Teaching of Śaṅkarācārya* what he considers to be the weak points, this is what Professor Sastri observes, 'When all this has been said, we have still to turn and pay homage to Śaṅkara without stint. When and by whom the threads that constituted the warp and woof of Advaita were spun, we do not know. We do know of the decorations and embroideries of some value added on to the fabric, by some of Śaṅkara's contemporaries and successors. And some predecessors of his would seem to have worked out small pattern designs calculated more to please or edify rather than to be serviceable. The main fabric of Advaita, the garment which has clothed Indian thought for so much of domestic as well as foreign service through these long centuries, that is essentially the handiwork of Śaṅkara, the youthful preceptor of elderly disciples, the non-dualist champion of six faiths, the orthodox opponent of ritualism and the rational opponent of logicism. To him all eyes have turned and will continue to turn with loving reverence, so long as man retains his nobility, and wisdom

its prestige.' Among the distinguished decorators and embroiderers Professor Suryanarayana Sastri was certainly one. To the illustrious history of Advaita, Professor Suryanarayana Sastri has added a glorious chapter. The world of Indian philosophy will ever feel grateful to him for this significant contribution.

Professor Sastri's studies extended over several systems besides Śivādvaita and Advaita. Mention may be made of Sāṅkhya, Pūrva-mīmāṁsā and Pratyabhijñā. He also guided reserach of scholars in these and other areas such as Viśiṣṭādvaita, Dvaita and Śaivasiddhānta and Political philosophy. And, as part of his departmental duties he used to deliver an annual course of lectures pertaining to his researches. In view of the fact that the Department of Philosophy was a one-man Department, it may easily be imagined what a great loss the University sustained when Professor Suryanarayana Sastri passed away prematurely in December 1942. There were two research scholars working in the Department at the time. As interim arrangement they were placed under my supervision—a task which I was glad to undertake in addition to my duties as Professor of Philosophy at Pachaiyappa's College.

Then, an unexpected thing happened, which was rather painful to many a lover of Indian Philosophy. The Readership was split into two Senior Lecturerships in order to provide for a new Department of Experimental Psychology. While the institution of a department for the discipline of Psychology was welcome, the question that was asked was : should it be at the expense of Indian Philosophy ? Instead of upgrading the Department which had a fine record of work to its credit under the stewardship of Professor Suryanarayana Sastri, it was being downgraded. So, when the post of Senior Lecturer in Indian Philosophy was offered to me, I was hesitant, and almost reluctant, to accept it, not

for any personal reason, but because of the unjust treatment that was meted out to Philosophy. When finally I decided to join the University Department, it was because of the deep obligation I owed both to the subject and to the memory of Professor Sastri at whose hands I had received uniform appreciation and the most tender kindness. On 15th September 1943, I went to the Registrar's office to report myself to duty. The Registrar, greeted me and said : 'So I see you will start from today blackening sheets of white paper.' I knew it was meant as a joke. But it also indicated that there was prevalent such a view of research. The initial challenges acted as a spur for making a determined and sustained effort to restore the image that Professor Sastri had succeeded in building up. In October 1949, the Readership was restored. Proposals were eventually submitted to the University Grants Commission for expansion of the Department to embrace the various systems of philosophy. Sanction of the necessary recurring grant enabled the University to provide a full-fledged Department of Indian Philosophy with three members on its staff—one Professor, one Reader and one Lecturer. Dr. V. A. Devasenapathi, then Assistant Professor of Philosophy at Pachaiyappa's College, was appointed Reader, and he joined the Department on 16th September 1956. He had worked under Professor Suryanarayana Sastri as a Research Scholar in the years 1935-1938; again he was in the Department as Research Fellow in 1946-1948 to complete his doctoral thesis on Śaivasiddhānta. To the post of Lecturer, Dr. P. K. Sundaram, who was working in the Department as Research Fellow in the area of Advaita Epistemology, was appointed ; he joined duty on 27th January 1956.

My special interest has lain in the field of Advaita ; and all these long years, I have striven to understand and expound

it. In the very first year of my studentship in the Department, Professor Sastri gave me his free English rendering of a small Advaita classic, the *Bheda-dhikāra* of Nṛisimhāśramin, and asked me to read through it and write a paper sketching the line of dialectical argument against the concept of difference as developed in the work. When the work was subsequently published in 1936 under the title '*A Crtique of Difference*' I was surprised to find my name printed on the title page along with Professor Suryanarayana Sastri's and his very generous words about me included in the Preface. This is what he wrote : 'Mr. T. M. P. Mahadevan, Research Student attached to this Department, was of great service in going through the rendering and suggesting several improvements tending to a great clarity. The Introduction, which is a brief outline of the argument of the book, is Mr. Mahadevan's work.'

The theme I chose for my doctoral thesis was '*The Philosophy of Advaita with special Reference to Bhāratītīrtha-Vidyāraṇya.* I began my work with a study of the fifteen chaptered metrical manual, *Pañcadaśī*, of this fourteenth century preceptor of Advaita. As preparatory to my thesis, I prepared an interpretative exposition of the fifteen chapters. What I then wrote was published in book-form in 1969 under the title '*The Pañcadaśī of Bhāratītīrtha-Vidyāraṇya*'. A dialectical work of the great teacher to which I turned my attention next is the *Vivaraṇa-prameya-saṅgraha* which is a summary of the topics dealt with in the *Vīvarana* of Parkāśātman. It was when I was engaged in this study that Professor Sastri translated it and helped me in understanding this difficult text. For a comprehensive treatment of Advaita, I had to study the works of other preceptors also, such as Dharmarāja, Vimuktātman, Citsukha and Appayya Dīkṣita. What I have attempted in the thesis is a logical

presentation—so far as logic can go—, and a topical arrangement of the aspects of Advaita. The doctoral thesis was first published in 1938.

After I assumed charge of the Department, a problem I had been interested in for a long time, namely Advaita *vis-a-vis* Buddhism, led me to a close analytical study of Gauḍapāda's *Māṇḍūkya-kārikā*. The occasion was provided by the appearance of an edition of the *Kārikā* wherein in the Introduction the editor, Professor Vidhusekhara Bhattacharya, argues that Gauḍapāda has accepted or approved of Bauddha doctrines and advocated them throughout the *Kārikā*. I have sought to show in the penultimate chapter of my work, *Gauḍapāda : A Study in Early Advaita*, that the great teacher who was an illustrious predecessor of Śaṅkara should be regarded as a lineal descendant of sages like Yājñavalkya and Uddālaka and not of Bauddha teachers like Nāgārjuna and Asaṅga. With these words I concluded my work : 'In the history of Advaita his name will ever remain as that of a great pioneer who combined in himself a deep mysticism with a penetrating philosophy, and a poetic vision with a logical mind.'

A basic insight of Śaṅkara's Advaita is that release from bondage which is the supreme goal can be achieved only through knowledge (*jñāna*) and not through action (*karma*). Among the disciples of Śaṅkara, the one who had made this the central issue was Sureśvarācārya. He develops this theme in his metrical works known as *Vārtikas* which are in the form of elaborations of some of Śaṅkara's commentaries. One of the commentaries on which Sureśvara has written a *Vārtika* is the one on the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad*. The introductory portion which is known as the *Saṁbandha-vārtika* is a lengthy treatise on the relation between *karma* and *jñāna*, and may serve as an independent manual of Advaita. I made a study of this work with the help of

commentaries, some of them unpublished, and translated it into English with explanatory notes and an introduction. This was first published in 1958. The *Saṁbandha-vārtikaṁ* as well as another work of Sureśvara, the *Naiṣkarmyasiddhi*, offer a penetrating criticism of the *Pūrva-mīmāṁsā* system and thereby spotlight the uniqueness of Advaita.

It will be seen that although the chosen sphere of study and research is the same, *viz.*, Advaita, for both Professor Suryanarayana Sastri and me, our emphases have been different. As I have pointed out earlier, Professor Sastri assigned greater value to Maṇḍana's Advaita than to Śaṅkara's. This was because he felt that there were difficulties and defects in Śaṅkara's philosophy which could be avoided if one followed Maṇḍana. I have attempted to show in my varied writings that the difficulties and defects are apparent rather than real. For instance (1) as regards the charge that, unlike Maṇḍana, Śaṅkara did not recognise the continuity between the relative (*vyāvahārika*) and the absolute (*pāramārthika*), I would make the following observation: the question of continuity or discontinuity will arise only as between two reals of the same grade. The absolute is the only reality, and the relative is an appearance thereof. In regard to the rope-snake example, one cannot speak of continuity or discontinuity of the rope with the snake. The relative world has no reality other than the absolute Self. The 'true' Advaita is that which does not recognise duality between the *vyāvahārika* and the *pāramārthika*. And that is Śaṅkara's. This does not, however, mean 'lordly indifference' to or 'neglect' of the affairs of the world. The life and work of Śaṅkara are proof positive to show how ceaselessly the Master strove for the welfare of the world. The world of *māyā* is neither irrelevant nor opposed to *Brahman*. It is, as even Professor Sastri recognises, a semblance of the Absolute. (2) As regards the alleged dominance of negation in

Śaṅkara's Advaita, under the influence of the Mādhyamika dialectic, I have pointed out in several contexts that this allegation has no validity. Reality, according to Śaṅkara, is not 'nothing'. While the alternative standpoints of the dialectic cannot comprehend it, each has its use in serving as a pointer. As Professor Sastri himself has observed, *Brahman* is *nirguṇa*, not in the sense that it is void of character, but in the sense that it is devoid of characteristics and limitations. (3) Knowledge (*jñāna*) is the sole means to release (*mokṣa*) according to Śaṅkara's Advaita. Professor Sastri has as we have seen, spotted out what he considers to be defects in this doctrine. These I have examined elsewhere and attempted to show why and in what sense knowledge is the direct means (*sākṣāt-sādhana*) to release. Very crisply, Śaṅkara declares in the *Ātma-bodha* : 'Action does not remove nescience as it is not opposed to it; knowledge does destroy nescience as light (destroys) darkness. The path of knowledge should not be regarded as the way of the mere intellect. The other two major aspects of mental life, *viz.*, the will and emotions are not neglected ; they have their rightful place. Since what is considered to be achieved, *i.e.*, release, is already there, and not what is to be newly acquired, knowledge is the direct means. (4) As between sublation and sublimation Professor Sastri chooses the latter concept. Is error sublated when the truth is known, or is it sublimated into truth ? According to him, the latter is the case. If sublimation means change or transformation, this, it seems to me, is not compatible with Advaita. Of the mental states, the lower may be sublimated into the higher. But what is appearance cannot be transformed into reality. When the rope is known, the snake is sublated and not sublimated. We may say that appearance is identical with reality, but only as rid of its nature as appearance. (5) The distinction between *jīvanmukti* (liberation while yet living in

the body) and *videhamukti* (liberation on the decease of the body) may be a *hereditas damnosa* from the Sāṅkhya system. But while for the Sāṅkhya system the distinction is real, for Advaita it is not so. The explanation that for the *jīvanmukta* the body lasts till the *prārabdha-karma* (the *karma* that has begun to fructify) is exhausted is intended only to satisfy the curiosity of the ignorant ; it has no intrinsic validity. For the *jīvanmukta* there is no body at all ; and so there is no need either for explaining the continuance of the body. In his *Aparokṣānubhūti*, Śaṅkara says that there is no *prārabdha* for the liberated sage. ' After the knowledge of Truth has arisen, there is no *prārabdha* at all, because the body, etc., are unreal, even as there can be no dream after waking.' (6) The concept of *sarvamukti* (universal liberation) is not inconsistent with Śaṅkara's Advaita. So long as there is the separatist notion of ' self ' and ' others ' there is need to help others in their progress towards the goal as far as it lies in one's ability. As for the sage who has realised, he is the guide for all. It is for stressing the need of every being receiving help along the road to the final goal that Śaṅkara says that sages like Apāntaratamas, Bhṛgu, and Nārada work for the welfare for the world, even after death.

Both Professor Suryanarayana Sastri and I have not been contented with translations of texts, expositions and analyses. We have also attempted to show how relevant Advaita is for the management of man's—even contemporary man's —problems, ethical, social, political, etc. For instance, explaining in an article the relevance of Prābhākara Mīmāṁsā and Advaita to the question regarding the source of legal obligation, Professor Sastri concludes : ' Law is obligatory because the Law is one, is identical with the Self, and the very understanding of it is realised to be of such majesty as cannot but command obedience.' In a paper on ' India's policy of

Non-alignment' published in the *Indian Year Book of International Affairs*, Volume Two (1953), I have traced the policy to the philosophy of non-duality, and concluded saying : 'In view of the basic metaphysics of India and the ethics that springs therefrom, it ought not to be difficult to understand India's policy of non-alignment. Although Self-realisation comes only to a few at a given time, the Indian nation as a whole cannot remain at any time uninfluenced by the spiritual culture of this ancient land. We may not be able to trace all the lines that connect our present with the past. Yet, we cannot doubt that there is a connection—and that a vital one.'

In recent years, I have sought to study the Advaita that is taught even in *Itihāsa-purāṇa*, the Epics and the Ancient Lays. In the lectures on the *Viṣṇu-purāṇa* delivered at the University of Poona in 1971, I have made the following observation :

'My present endeavour is to show that one of the eighteen *Purāṇas*, probably the earliest, the *Viṣṇu-purāṇa*, contains teachings which are of inestimable help in understanding Advaita. The teachings are fascinating because they are in the dialogue form, as is the case with many of the *Upaniṣads*. The *Purāṇas*, in general, may be regarded as illustrative explanations of the philosophy of the *Vedas*. If the teaching of the *Vedas* is like the commands of a master (*prabhu-sammita*), that of the *Purāṇas* is like the counsel of a friend (*suhṛt-sammita*). Conforming to this mode, the philosophical teachings of the *Viṣṇu-purāṇa* are cast in friendly and intimate terms, which consequently possess a charm all their own.'

'On the basis of quality and extent of work already done' by the Department, its 'reputation and contribution to research', and its 'potentiality for future development' it was upgraded into a Centre for Advanced Study in Philosophy by the University Grants Commission in the year 1964.

By virtue of the additional facilities made available, the Centre launched upon a programme of planned development. (1) While making additions to the staff, care was taken to accommodate as many philosophical disciplines as possible. Among the new appointees there were specialists in Aesthetics, Social Ethics, Comparative Philosophy, Modern Logic and Linguistic Analysis. A place was also provided for a scholar who had specialised in philosophical classics in Sanskrit. (2) The number of research scholars came to be considerably augmented. The scholars who joined the Centre for doctoral and post-doctoral research came from the different parts of India. Scholars came also from other countries such as Japan, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Greece, Germany, France, Holland, England and the Americas. The choice of subjects for research covered a wide spectrum. (3) From time to time, professors from abroad have come and participated in the Centre's work offering courses of lectures on aspects of Western Philosophy such as Existentialism, Phenomenology, Analytical Philosophy, and Classical, Medieval and Modern Thought. They have also received help in their studies in Indian Philosophy. (4) The Centre organised, between 1965 and 1975, eighteen All-India Seminars. These were usually half-yearly meets. A theme was set for each seminar and leading scholars from different universities in India as well as foreign scholars who happened to be in India at that time were invited to participate in the Seminar. Papers were presented and discussed on various aspects and problems relating to the themes were discussed for three days. Normally, the theme for the first seminar in each academic year was of specialised interest, and that for the second, of wider reach. Among the topics for the eighteen seminars figure concepts like *Karma* and Rebirth, *Māyā*, Liberation, God, Person, Being, Reality and the Categories of Thought, Consciousness, etc., problems such as method in philosophy,

meaning of metaphysics, determinism and moral freedom, philosophy and social conflict ; topics in Indian philosophy, such as its concern for society, the evolutionism of Sri Aurobindo, Gandhian *Weltanschauung*, South Indian mysticism ; and a theme in comparative philosophy, viz., Advaita-vedānta and Western thought. The Seminars served the very desirable purpose of bringing together scholars from the different parts of the country so that they might compare notes and exchange the fruits of knowledge gained. Besides the All-India Seminars, the Centre organised an International Seminar on World-Philosophy in 1970. The theme of the Seminar was ' Philosophy : Theory and Practice'. Nineteen scholars from abroad and eighteen from India participated in the Seminar, besides several who were taken as Associate Members. Mention may be made of a few other seminars co-sponsored by other Institutions : A Seminar on Teilhard de Chardin in collaboration with Alliance Francaise, a Seminar on Philosophy and Science in co-operation with India International, and two Seminars one on Secularism and the other on Kant in association with Max Mueller Bhavan. (5) During the year 1967-'68, the Unesco initiated a project concerning the study of Civilizations of Peoples of Central Asia, with a view to deepening scholarly knowledge and bringing about a better appreciation by the general public of the cultures of Central Asia. Five main fields of study were identified. Of these ' Studies on History of Ideas and Philosophy ' was one. This was assigned to India. Unesco invited us to undertake this work. We made a preliminary survey and prepared a report on it. As follow-up work, we were commissioned to carry on studies on two specific themes (i) A Study of Bhakti movements in North India and their impact on the cultural trends together with an assessment of the nature and extent of the influence of South Indian leaders of thought on the Traditions of Bhakti both in

North India and beyond the Himalayan borders. (ii) The contribution of Buddhist thought in general and of Philosophers like Vasubandhu in particular and an assessment of the impact of Buddhist philosophy and logic on Central Asian countries. The first study was completed with the assistance of Professor K. Seshadri, and the report sent to the Indian National Commission for co-operation with Unesco. (6) With the setting up of the Centre for Advanced Study, a number of publications became possible. So far, ten Volumes of the *Indian Philosophical Annual* have been published. These carry the papers presented at the All-India Seminars as also special articles. The proceedings of the International Seminar have been published in a separate Volume, bearing the theme as its title ; *Philosophy : Theory and Practice*. Among the other publications are books written by members of staff, and selected doctoral theses. '*The Word-Index to the Brahma-sūtra-bhāṣya of Śaṅkarācārya* was brought out in two parts. Mention may also be made of *Index to Dissertations in Philosophy*, compiled by the Library Assistant. The content of philosophy courses in the Universities has changed little even after Indian Independence. It is mostly oriented towards the West. In three of the Colleges affiliated to the University of Madras where philosophy for the M.A. Degree is taught, it is the conventional course that is offered. Taking advantage of the new facilities, the Centre organised an alternative course devoted to Indian Philosophy. This is being offered from the academic year 1969-'70. Foreign scholars who came to this country for studying Indian Philosophy have been taking advantage of this course, as also our students who wish to have an insight into Indian Philosophical perspectives.

I had not realised until recently, when I have had the time to reflect on account of the occasion provided by the Golden Jubilee how much work has been done in the Department

and how much more remains to be accomplished. It will be remembered that the Chair in Indian Philosophy was instituted in 1927 with the aim of promoting South Indian Thought. This, however, does not mean any parochailism. At a time when Indian Philosophy was little known to the educated Indian, and South Indian philosophy even less, it was but legitimate that the Department of Philosophy started in Madras should lay emphasis on the philosophical schools of which South India was the home. But these schools were not confined to the South. The great Ācāryas who hailed from the South toured the entire country, spreading the knowledge of the Truth they had gained. It may be of interest to note that Śaṅkara who was born in the South and who is recognised as a world-philosopher of great magnitude, who is not only a spectator of all time and existence but also a practical revolutionary, is referred to by one of his eminent North Indian disciples as ' our venerable Drāviḍa '. And, it is particularly appropriate that our philosophy Centre should have been recently re-named after another Great *Drāviḍa*, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, a bridge-builder between the East and the West, of our time.

It is gratifying to note that the Dr. S. Radhakrishnan Institute for Advanced Study in Philosophy, in drawing up its ten-year perspective plan, has taken as the basic policies the principles of continuity and diversification. It may be relevant to point out that these have been the guiding principles of the Department from its very inception. Obviously, greater diversification becomes possible only with increase in facilities and augmentation in the number of the ' doers ' of philosophy. While making attempts at diversification, it is to be hoped, the Institute will not lose sight of the Vision of Unity.

I cannot end this address better than by citing a passage from a speech of His Holiness the Sage of Kāñcī, wherein

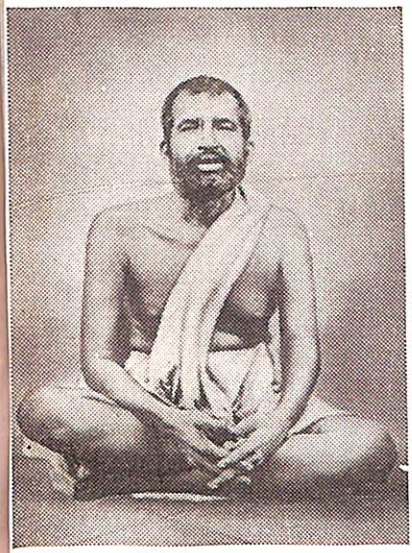
he shows how in the total perspective of non-duality every school of thought finds its rightful place, including even the atheistic Cārvāka. The following is the passage :

'If one were to ask, "how can a view which is atheistic be a philosophico-religious school?" we reply, "because that too culminates in Advaita". The thinker who says "There is no God; there is no soul. The body alone is real," is far superior to the person who is lethargic, rises up from bed late in the morning at seven or eight, who is without *ācāra* and, *anuṣṭhāna* (religious practices), who eats indiscriminately and sleeps, although he may belong to a religious tradition.'

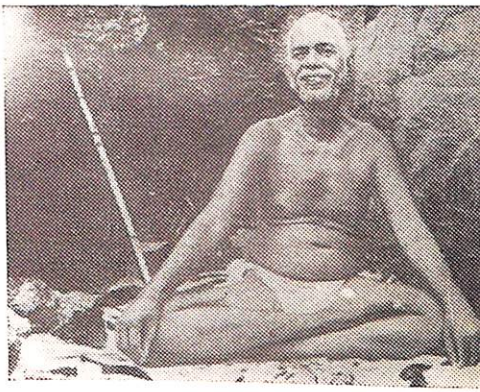
'Why is the atheistic Cārvāka superior? Because he has begun to seek the truth. Is there a soul or not? Is there God, or is there not? He has begun to engage himself in this enquiry. Even if the negative answer he finds be his final conclusion, he should be considered to be superior to an uninquiring lazy person.'

'The atheist has made metaphysical enquiry at least up to the first step which tells him "There is no God." If he pursues the enquiry still further, and if his experience matures, he will succeed in understanding the truth of Advaita.

'Therefore, whatever be the philosophical standpoint, it will be found to be helpful in our search for truth. We should not hate any philosophical school. The Ācāryas who lived more than a thousand years ago, as well as those who came recently a couple of hundred years ago, have taught us this truth.'



Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa



Śrī Ramaṇa Maharshi

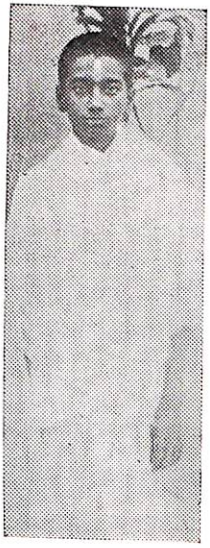
Śrī Mahāpurushaji Maharāj

Swami Rajeśvarananda

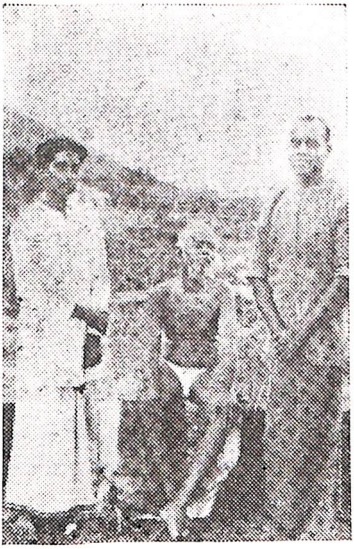
Ādi Śaṅkara

H. H. Jagadguru of Kāñcī

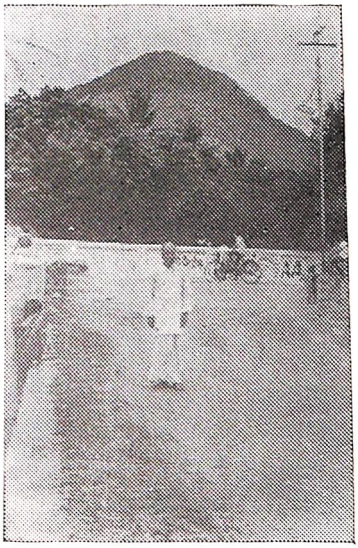
In 1922



In 1926

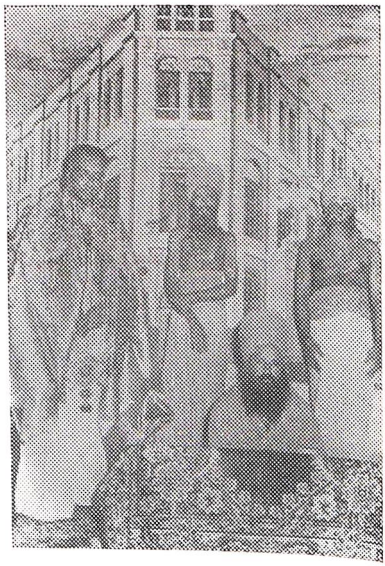


With Maharshi and Swami in 1928

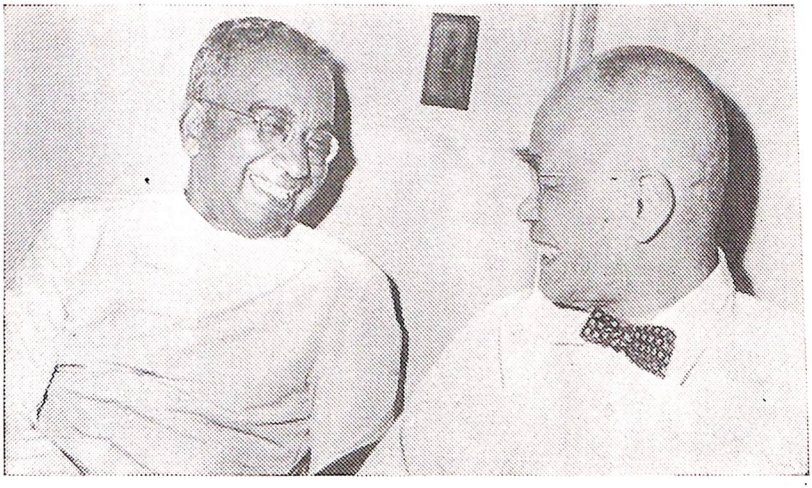


With Arunāchala in the background

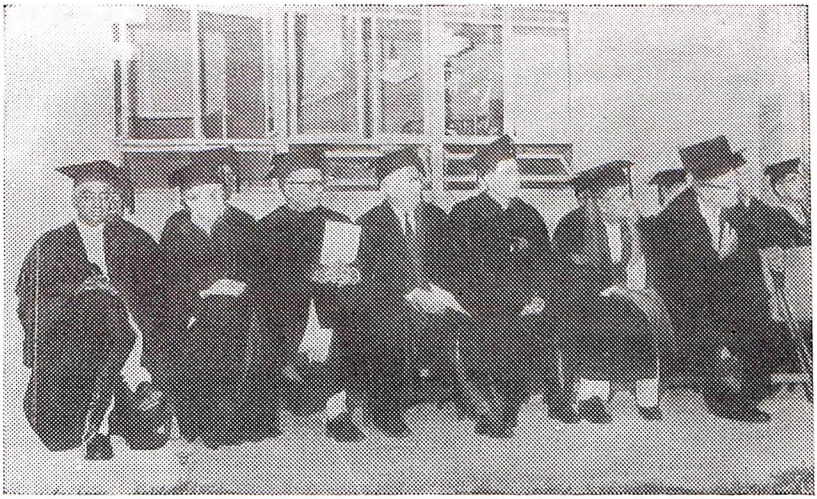
Dr. Radhakrishnan pinning Padmabhushan decoration in 1967



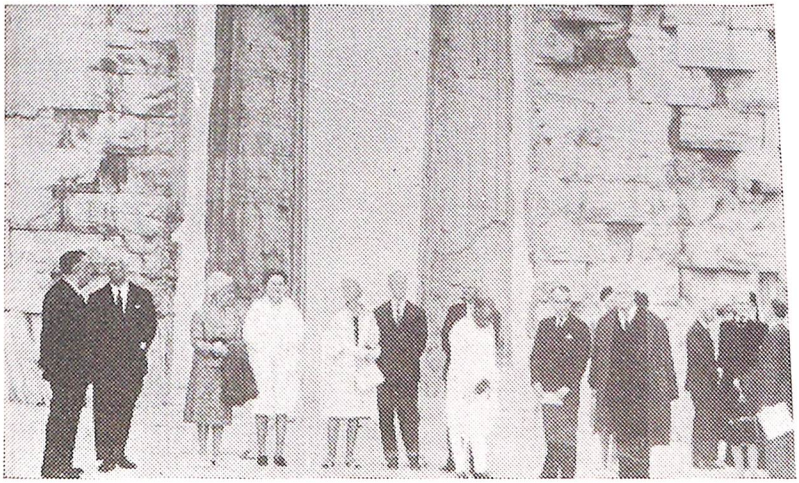
Vedanta-vittakar Title conferred at Dharmapuram Adhinam 1957



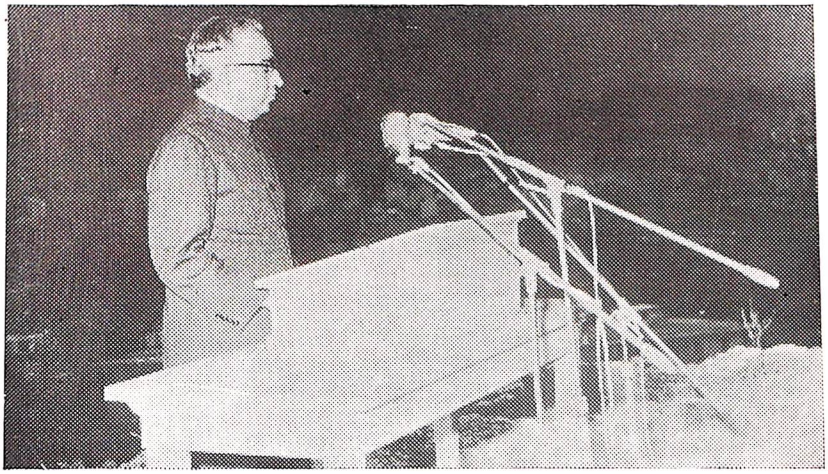
With Dr. D. T. Suzuki in Hawaii, 1959



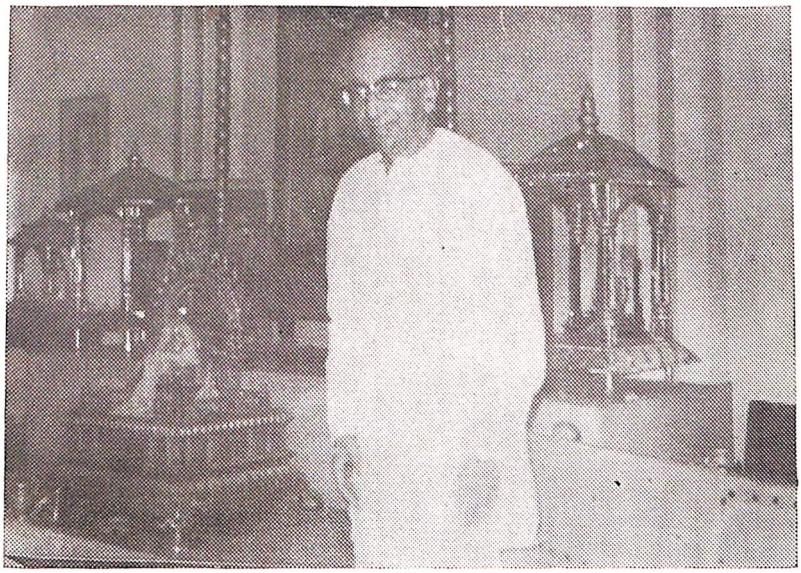
Convocation at University of Hawaii, 1959



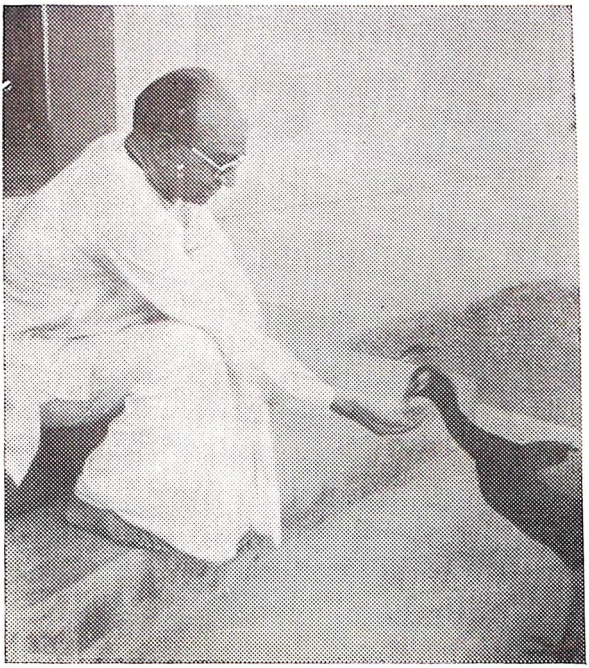
The Athens meeting : Inauguration at Acropolis, 1966



Speech on the Hill of the Pnyx, 1966



In Śaṅkara Vihar Shrine



At Ramaṇāśramam

14

My Visit to the United States

I took leave from the University for a year in 1948-'49 in order to visit the U.S.A. In the previous year Dr. E. A. Burtt, Professor of Philosophy, Cornell University, had visited India and met several teachers of Philosophy in the different Universities in the country. When we met in Madras he asked me if I would be willing to go to the United States for a year to teach Indian Philosophy. I said I would be glad to. After returning to America he made arrangements through the Wattumull Foundation for my visit. I left Madras on the 20th of August 1948 from Egmore Station by what was then called the Boat Mail. Many friends saw me off and wished me a successful tour. The next afternoon I reached Dhanushkodi and after crossing the straits by boat I travelled by train to Colombo where I arrived on the 22nd of August. Coming to know of my visit to Sri Lanka a few public meetings were arranged for me in Colombo and a press reporter interviewed me asking questions about my views on education. A report of this interview appeared in the 'Times of Ceylon' dated August 23rd : 'Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan, Professor and Head of the Department of Indian Philosophy, Madras University, feels that there should be correlation between

school and University education as it would help to do away with a separate test to admit students in the University. In choosing a career a student should always consult the master who knows him best. The parents should leave the final decision to them.

'Dr Mahadevan, who is on his way to the Cornell University, U.S.A., to deliver a series of lectures as a visiting Professor arrived in Colombo by the Talaimannar train yesterday.'

'Regarding education in the mother tongue, he pointed out that a student should be taught to learn in his own language. The foreign language should be secondary, the medium of instruction should be the mother tongue.'

'The most suitable age for a student to start a University career was between sixteen and eighteen years. Primary education should be compulsory and free while it would be ideal to have complete education also free, if possible.'

'In regard to religious instruction in schools he said, that the schools run by the State should not teach denominational religion separately. But it would be ideal if broad-minded teachers could be made available to teach the essentials of all religions to all pupils. In denominational schools the students should be given the option to follow their own faith. It was not so much a religious outlook that was necessary as a "spiritual outlook." It was not very advisable for students to divide themselves into political groups ; but they should keep in touch with current political issues for the sake of education.'

'On co-education Dr. Mahadevan observed that there was no harm in adopting it in the primary and the University stages. But it was best to have secondary education (in forms four to six) given separately to the two sexes. There was no harm too in imparting sex instruction in schools, provided it was done properly and by teachers qualified to

speak on it ; it was however not desirable for both girls and boys to receive such instruction in the same class.

'Dr. Mahadevan added that sports and physical culture should be advocated in schools. It was a mistake to think that attention to sports and exercises would have an adverse effect on students.

' In regard to the political situation there it was not as bad as it has been made out to be.'

In Colombo I was the guest of the Ramakrishna Mission, Wellavate. The President Svāmī of the Mission received me on arrival at the Colombo Railway Station and made all arrangements for my stay. The main function was the lecture which I delivered at the Ramakrishna Mission.

On the Message of the East

The substance of what I spoke there was this : The way that India has shown the world is the way that was taught and followed by Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Śaṅkara, Buddha, Rāmakṛṣṇa and Gandhi. That is the message of the East. The way is the path of the Spirit. As Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa says, if you add zeroes, one after the other, they will have no value at all. But if you add number one before them the value of the zeroes will increase with each addition. That number one is the Self. It is the same as the God-head. It is through the strength of the spirit that Gandhi earned for India her independence from a formidable empire. It is the supremacy of the Self that is taught by the Orient. It is the bliss of the Self that is bliss eternal. It is this path that was blazened forth by Mahātmā Gandhi. Our duty is to follow this path.

Colombo is the meeting place of the East and the West. Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa Mission is planning to build an Institute for fostering international culture-contacts. Everyone should help in the realisation of this project. Sri V. V. Giri who was then High Commissioner for India in Ceylon observed that

my speech was a lucid exposition of Vedānta from the bottom of my heart. Earlier Sri Giri had invited me for tea. He then informed me that he was in the United Kingdom when Professor S. S. Suryanarayana Sastri was there.

I delivered two other lectures before leaving Colombo. One was on the *Gītā, the Universal Mother* under the auspices of the Vivekānanda Society. The other was at the Young Men's Buddhist Association. At this meeting which was presided over by Dr. G. P. Malalasekara I described the Buddha as the Prince of Peace. In the course of the lecture I observed 'In India and the East philosophy is pursued not as a pastime or through curiosity but as a solution to the practical problems of life, and amongst those who renounced the things of the world and became a seer Buddha was the first Prince of Peace. He was the greatest healer of all time, in that he healed the ills of the soul, which lay deeper than physical ills. He discovered the cause of sorrow and its cure. There would be no escape from sorrow so long as there was involvement in transmigration. Peace, according to the teachings of Buddha, can be achieved only through love. He advised people to render love for hatred.

On the 26th of August I set sail from Colombo Port for England en route to America. It was an old P & O. Liner SS Maloja. The Svāmī of the Rāmakṛṣṇa Mission and other friends came on board the ship to bid me good-bye. This was to be our floating island on the seas for over a month. The number of passengers was about a thousand and there was an equal number of members of the crew. Among the passengers there were some friends whom I had known earlier. There were also many Australians. A young Australian who was going to England for medical studies and an old Scotsman returning home became friends with me. It took some time for me to get used to Australian pronounciation of English words. When I heard the announcement 'Aideck'

or ' laidies ' I did not know what they meant. Later on I came to know that the two terms respectively were ' A-deck ' and ' ladies '.

Coming to know that I was a teacher of philosophy, several passengers in groups or individually were holding now and then discussions with me on problems like the modern lack of interest in religion, ends and means, Gandhian philosophy, etc.

On the third of September we reached Aden. Even from a distance the first rocky promontary was visible. At the port we were allowed to go ashore. We saw the old Arab town and barren desert land. There were three peoples : Arabs, Jews and Somalis. We went on board the ship that night and set sail again. The next morning, i.e. the 4th of September we were on the Red Sea. It was a fine sight to see groups of flying fish and sea-gulls and a chain of rocky islands. We reached the Suez-bay on the morning of the 7th and had to stay at Suez for that whole day because the day's convoy had left two hours earlier. We left early the next day and entered Suez Canal. It was about 8 p.m. that night when we reached Port Said. We went ashore for a while and returned to the ship. Early morning the next day, i.e. on the 9th of September, we entered the Mediterranean Sea and we passed the Island of Crete.

Some of the passengers were keen on listening to my lectures. From my diary I find that the following were the topics and that at each talk some scholarly passenger presided.

1. Why Religion ?
2. The Quest After Reality
3. What are We ?
4. Whither Do we Go ?

The voyage through the Mediterranean was rather interesting. We passed around the ' toe ' of Italy, entered the straits of Messina, saw the Volcanic Island with lava splashing forth,

passed between Sardinia and Corsica and reached Marseilles on the 13th of September. We went ashore and saw Notre Dame and other places. Returning to the ship that night, we went to Marseilles again the next morning for sight-seeing and shopping. Early morning on the 19th we were able to see Devon on the English Coast which was quite in contrast with the Mediterranean Coast.

On the 20th of September early morning we reached the Tilbury docks. An Indian friend of mine who was then the Military Attaché to the High Commission came and received me and drove me to London where I stayed for a week as his guest.

My first impression of London was that of a beautiful city although it bore a lot of evidence of having been battered by the *blitz*. The administration of London and the people as well were doing their best to clean up the city and to give it a new face-lift. My friend took me to places of interest such as the British Museum, the West Minister Abbey and Hyde Park where I saw orators on the famous 'soap-boxes' and haranguing at what I thought were airy nothings. I visited also the Victoria and Albert Museum, Science Museum and the National Gallery and St. Pauls Cathedral as also Madame Tussauds exhibition. At this last place I heard the following conversation between a father and a daughter who were looking at Mahātmā Gandhi's image. Father: 'This is Mr. Gandhi my dear, he was murdered a few months ago.' Daughter : (about five years old) : 'Oh, Yes Daddy, I know'. Of the sights I most enjoyed was the one from a boat on the Thames which took me from one end of the city to the other.

I had an interview with the first High Commissioner in London Mr. V. K. Krishna Menon. What struck me as remarkable was that he was standing all the while behind his table when the interview took place. He invited me for a

lunch he was giving to some visiting scientists which I accepted out of courtesy. Before leaving London I sent a recorded message to Madras. This was published in a Madras Paper.

'I send my greetings from London en route to the United States. My voyage to the West is proving to be interesting. I have been meeting people from different walks of life, and have found them thirsting for tidings of values that are abiding as also for knowledge of all that India stands for. It is amazing to note that there is colossal ignorance about our country abroad. India would need many of her sons and daughters to go out into the world to spread the message of her spiritual culture. In the era that is coming she can well play the role of a leader of nations to lasting peace. My travel has only substantiated the old saying in our land that to the large-hearted the entire world is their home. It is the small-minded that make distinctions and divisions.'

I left London by air on the 26th September in the evening. The plane made a stop-over at Prestwick (Scotland). On account of a storm there was some delay and also diversion. We made an unscheduled stop at Shannon (Ireland). On the 27th the plane stopped for a while at Gander, New Foundland (Canada), and from there arrived at New York airport that afternoon. Friends received me on arrival and made me feel at home. After, they took me to their home which was across the Hudson river. The drive through the Lincoln Tunnel about one and a half miles under the river was a new experience to me. I returned to New York and was lodged in a hotel where I was to spend the next few days before proceeding to Cornell.

I was under the impression that New York would be a bewildering city. From a long distance like Madras it appears as though man, in the midst of tall sky-scrapers and cement and steel giants touching the vault of the sky, would feel submerged and insignificant. But actually when one is

there in such a city there is no such feeling at all. On the contrary, he feels mightier than his creations.

In New York it is not difficult at all to locate a place we want go to or an address which we are in search of. The long avenues are parallel to one another and the streets that cut across them are also parallel. They are all numbered serially. The row of buildings in each block also bears serial numbers, different from each block. In a multistoreyed hotel the floors and rooms are also arithmetically numbered. On the first floor, for instance, in a hotel the rooms begin with 101 and if there are about eighty rooms the last room would be 180. On the next floor the rooms would begin with number 201 and not 181. I came to realise that all these were devices to economise on time. There is only one avenue in New York which runs diagonally, Broadway. Once I was walking along the pavement of the Fifth Avenue. I saw a photographer coming towards me. He told me, 'Every visitor loves to be photographed on that Avenue'. Before I could answer he clicked the camera took the charges and promised to send me a picture which never came.

My friends took me on a visit to various places in New York city such as the Empire State Building which was the tallest structure than, Rockefeller Centre, Metropolitan Museum, etc. I went to the Rāmakṛṣṇa Vivekānanda Centre where Svāmī Nikhilānanda was and heard him speak on a few Sunday mornings. I had known Svāmī Nikhilānanda years earlier in Madras and was to meet him again later in Hawaii.

On the 6th of October 1948 I left from Pennsylvania Station for Ithaca by the train 'The Black Diamond'. Leaving at about 11.00 a.m. I reached Ithaca at 6 p.m. Professor Burtt was there to receive me and take me to Cornell. From Ithaca town the road ascends and on top there is a large campus which is Cornell University. The plateau on the top of the

hill commands a fine view, with Lake Cayuga lying behind on the valley and with some waterfalls and natural scenic spots. Professor Burtt took me to the apartment which he had arranged for me. It was the residence of a Professor of the University. He and his wife were living on the ground floor. The apartment on the first floor came to be occupied by me, and on the second floor Professor Burtt was living alone.

The next day I was taken to the various parts of the campus. I attended also Professor Burtt's class on Kant. What struck me as odd, but what I later understood to be natural in campuses there was the quite informal and unconventional manner in which students behaved in class-rooms as well as towards their teachers. They addressed their Professor as Mister, smoked in the class-room, assuming all sorts of postures including stretching their legs on the tables and they did not rise up from their seats when the Professor entered.

I took some time to get used to American expressions such as 'yeah' probably from the German 'ya' or 'yep' for 'yes', 'I am thru' for 'I have finished', 'check on a thing' for 'leaving it in custody', 'obligate' for 'oblige', 'transportation' for 'transport', 'gasoline' for 'petrol', 'automobile' for 'car', 'elevator' for 'lift', etc. The day after I gave one of my lectures, a person, pointing out to me, said to another, 'Is this the fellow who lectured last evening?' I was taken aback but later on I came to know that 'fellow' is not a term of disrespect but merely the normal way there to refer to a person.

There were quite a few Indians studying at Cornell at that time. When some of them met me soon after my arrival there they were all praise for American 'honesty' etc. They told me that one can lock a house and go. Deliveries such as milk, grocery etc., could be left at the door-step and no one would think of stealing them. I told them, 'What you say is

quite true, but I suppose that is because of affluence ; don't you see reports in the daily press of big bank robberies, etc ? " I recalled to them what I had heard in London from an Indian journalist who had lived there for a long time. He said, ' Before the war, one could give the conductor of a bus money for the ticket, receive the balance and put it in one's pocket without counting. But now it is no longer possible.' It is amazing how Indian students were quick in adapting themselves to American conditions. As I used to walk along the pavement they would walk past me saying ' Hallo ' even without stopping and some of them later on remarked to me, ' You are the only one who has not changed his pace of walking.'

The average American student who enters the University, I found, was a little maturer than his counterpart in India. I noticed in him a better sense of responsibility, seriousness about study, and earnestness in completing his assignments without postponing them. I was amazed at the sight of even male students carrying to their class-rooms an armload of books (in India it is school-girls that usually carry a lot of books to their schools). The entire campus community works hard through the week-days. From Friday afternoon onwards the week-end presents the campus almost deserted. I thought it was a swing from intense work to complete abandon. This is a phase of American life which struck me as quite remarkable. The University commences work quite early in the morning at 8 a.m. and works till the evening, say 5 or 6 p.m. This, I suppose, is to facilitate students to have a wide choice of subjects of study. It is common to see a scholar majoring in engineering or medicine taking a few courses in philosophy, economics or history, which, one here may think, may have nothing to do with the major subject. But now even in India the view is changing : that

at the under-graduate level there should not be over-specialisation and that the stress should be on imparting liberal education.

I found that in America it is not difficult to get vegetarian food. In cafeterias one could pick up a variety of cereals, boiled vegetables, salads and fresh cheese and fruits. In restaurants or hotels one can always ask for what they call a vegetable plate. On the campus at Cornell there were quite a few cafeterias, the most popular one was the cafeteria run by the Department of Home Economics, referred to as 'Homecon'. I was often invited by Indian students to have a meal with them. I was surprised how young men from India learnt so quickly how to cook well. They told me that they could buy in the shops all the ingredients that are necessary for Indian cooking.

I must now go on to give an account of my work at Cornell. In the first semester I gave a course of lectures on the '*Concepts of Indian Philosophy*.' Announcing the first lecture the campus newspaper 'The Cornell Daily Sun' said, 'This will be the first of a series of Tuesday evening talks by Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan. He will gradually develop the history of Indian Philosophy and its relation to its Western counterpart. Tomorrow's discussion will be devoted to an introductory explanation of Indian thought—its basis in the religious books of the *Vedas* and the *Upaniṣads* and its direct integration with the Indian way of living.'

The first talk was given on Tuesday 19th of October 1948. I gave a series of ten talks in the first semester. The topics were as follows :

1. The Climate of Indian Thought.
2. The Sources of Indian Philosophy.
3. The Avenues of Knowledge.
4. The Real and the Non-real.
5. The Quest for Unity.

6. The World and its Becoming.
7. Discovery of the Soul.
8. The Roads to Freedom.
9. The End of Man.
10. Summing Up.

The lectures were attended by students, faculty-members as well as others. They were usually largely attended which fact showed that there was a keen interest in Indian thought. At the end of each talk there was a lively question and answer session. Occasionally questions were asked which were either irrelevant or based on ignorance. For instance, one questioner asked, 'Has *Cārvāka* anything to do with *cār*? (meaning four in Hindi)'.

Some of the faculty-members who attended these lectures invited me from time to time to talk to their respective classes, mostly on India and Indian Culture. I was also asked by associations and clubs to address their meetings. In December 1948 I was the guest-speaker at a meeting of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (Ithaca Branch). The Ithaca Journal (Tuesday, December 14, 1948), the local daily, reported my speech thus : 'He said that "India knows more about the rest of the world than the rest of the world knows about India," and went on to tell how India was unique in achieving independence by a non-violent revolution due to the great spiritual force of Mahātmā Gandhi.

'Since August 15, 1947, the birthday of Indian Freedom, the new government has had many problems to settle, not only the Pakistan situation, but some six-hundred native states, which were creations of British rule, had to be integrated. Hyderabad and Kashmir were special problems, but all are now part of the Union of India.

'The new government is now ready to go forward with

more general problems and they hope to have universal education within the next ten years. Agricultural improvements and more industrialisation are planned in order to raise the standard of living.

'The speaker stressed that India needed understanding more than help from America.'

In the same month I addressed a meeting of the Cornell Hindustan Association: 'India is a potentially powerful nation in the future world and a great force for universal peace', said Dr. Mahadevan. Thus reported 'Cornell Daily Sun' on December 18th. It went on to add, 'Already the countries of Asia are beginning to look up to India, and the countries of the Western World cannot afford to ignore her any longer', he said.

'The spirit of Mahātmā Gāndhi and his creed of non-violence has had a great effect on other countries and has caused a general awakening in Asia; the independence of Burma, the dominionship of Ceylon, and other freedom movements have been inspired by Gandhi and the Indian Independence.

'Dr. Mahadevan further explained that the national government of India had many troubles to iron out during the first year of independence. He mentioned the new constitution, now almost ready for the country, which will combine democracy and socialism and create a state deriving its power from the people. There will be no official state religion in India, thus classifying it as a secular state "Professor Mahadevan asserted."

Among the many speaking and discussion engagements I had during my stay at Cornell, I remember the discussion at Watermargin, a Fraternity House. I was assigned to this unit for leading a discussion on religion. The boys began with their business-meeting. There was a heated discussion on procedural rules, for admitting new members. Then

there was a roll-call by the Secretary who was a Chinese. The Conference began at 9 p.m. I addressed the boys as 'Brothers'; this seemed to create the atmosphere which became very conducive. I pointed out that their ideal was in keeping with the spirit of Indian culture according to which all are brothers and there should be no discrimination. I exhorted them to be as serious about religion as they were about procedural rules and then invited them to discuss religion. I posed before them the following questions: (1) Will not good life do? Why religion? (2) Have not professors of religion promoted division and hatred? (3) Is man more than his body? (4) Why assume a soul? What is it? There was a thorough discussion of these questions and the meeting ended at about 11 o'clock.

In December Professor Burtt asked me to speak to his graduate class on the *Bhagavad-gītā*. At the end a woman-student came up to Professor Burtt and asked him, 'Will this gentleman give some more lectures to us?' The beauty of the truth in our *Gītā* had found response in this student. An Egyptian student wondered, 'How is it that you lecture without a note?' She would eventually find out that when the heart is steeped in the topic one may lecture without hindrance and that notes are hardly necessary. I went to a drug-store where a sales-girl asked me about the next course of lectures. She told me that she would like to attend all the lectures and hoped that these would not be the last series. On another day in the same month I went to the One World Club to listen to a speech on the situation in China by one Professor H. E. Shadick. After the lecture we sat at a lunch-table together. He told me that he had attended two lectures of mine. He too had noticed the keen interest in Indian Culture evinced by the audience and was struck by the sustained attention.

I was invited by Professor Romanell to visit Wells College (a girls college) referred to as Fair Wells, when he came to attend one of my lectures. He suggested that I should address the girls of that College and asked me for a topic. I told him that I would speak on 'What Freedom means to India.' The College is situated at the other end of the Cayuga Lake in a picturesque spot. Professor Romanell, while introducing me, said that I was going to speak about Gandhi's Philosophy, and the philosophical implications of freedom. He was right and that was what I spoke on. There was a dinner after the lecture. The drive to and from Wells College was quite an enjoyable one.

Another trip which I very much liked was to Cazenovia, about fifty-five miles from Ithaca. Professor Cunningham, who was the Chairman of the Department of Philosophy (Called Sage School of Philosophy) and Professor Smart took me by car. On both sides of the road stretches of blue cabbages and other vegetables in the fields could be seen. Professor Smart told me a story as to how classical names came to be given to towns. He said that names were chosen from a classical dictionary. Some towns, especially lakes, have Indian names. In Cazenovia we were accommodated in a hotel. There was to be a meeting of philosophers after dinner. One Dr. T. V. Smith read a paper on the political way of life. He had a fine epigrammatical style, an undertone of cynicism. 'Morality's extremity is politics', he said. He spoke of three kinds of politics : geo-politics (Germany) neo-politics (Russia) and plain-politics (America). He went on to say, 'None should have everything ; everyone cannot have everything ; everyone should have something.' The next morning there was another session of the meeting at which two papers were read and discussed (1) Examination of Toynbee's Study of History and (2) Scientist, Moralist, or Technician !

Professor Cunningham introduced me to a Professor from Wells College who said that he had already heard a student of that College speaking to his wife about the lecture that I had delivered some time earlier.

After lunch we returned to Ithaca. I went to Cazenovia once again in April 1949 with Professor Burtt to attend a meeting of the Creighton Club. Professor Harrop Black a member of the Philosophy Faculty of Cornell read a paper on '*A Definition of A Scientific Method*'. It was followed by a discussion.

One of the visits that friends arranged for me which was an interesting and instructive one was to Corning, about forty-one miles away. The towns on the way were almost alike. I was struck by the name of a shop which met my eye at one of those towns 'Serve—u, save—u, shop.' The purpose of this visit was to see the famous glass-works in that town. A guide took us around. The entrance to the factory had this 'Let's all pull in our Waste-line' and another 'Waste Doesn't pay wages'. Inside the workshop one of the signboards read 'Don't let that Idea get away send us your Suggestions'. By the side of the signboard there was a picture of a man letting go a winged white cloud. We went around the various departments. While the coarser pieces of glass manufacture, like childrens' milk-bottles, were done by machine, the finer work was done by hand, such as artistic bowls, laboratory apparatuses, etc. The person who served as our guide remarked, 'You can't force the glass to do something, you can only guide it.'

Before I go on to the next part of my narration, I must refer to one of my traits which is shyness, my shield. I want to illustrate this by giving a very ordinary instance. One evening I went to a cafeteria on the campus to have a meal but discovered that I had not brought my purse, returned without having a meal beause I felt too shy to ask

for a loan, not even from Professor Burtt who met me on the way.

During the Christmas holidays I planned to tour the country a little and also to attend the Annual Conference of the American Philosophical Association. I left Ithaca by train on the night of the 26th December. I got off at Philadelphia the next day. A fellow passenger (American) took me in a taxi to Pennsylvania Station. On the dash-board of the taxi I saw the following inscription placed: 'Old age helpless; childhood playful; youth restless; middle age busy; these are the four classes of pedestrains; be alert, help save their lives.' Taking the train at Pennsylvania Station I reached Washington by noon. I met Professor Romanell there who was with some other professors whom he introduced to me. All of us took the train to Charlottsville (Virginia) where the Annual Meeting was to be. Virginia is a Southern State where there was colour discrimination. At Railway stations, for instance, there were separate waiting-rooms with signboards 'white' and 'coloured'. Unlike as in India or in other countries, no one was there at the station to receive the delegates, there were no volunteers, no placards. We went in a taxi to Monticello Hotel where accommodation had been reserved for the delegates. On the 28th morning at breakfast I met Svāmī Akhilānanda whom I had known many years earlier at the Rāmakṛṣṇa Maṭh, Madras. He was in America as Head of the Rāmakṛṣṇa Vedānta Centre in Boston. I learnt that he was a member of the American Philosophical Association. Dr. Charles A. Moore, Hawaii, was also there. We were taken in a bus to the University for the meeting. Professor A. J. Ayer presented his paper on 'What is an Individual?'; this was followed by Professor Paul Shrecker's paper on 'Natural Law' and Professor A. R. Caponigir's paper on 'The Problem of History'. In the afternoon that

day we went on a tour from Monticello and saw Thomas Jefferson's home. During this tour I made acquaintance with Dr. W. T. Stace. He said that he was then teaching at Princeton. I had known him through his well-known book 'History of Greek Philosophy'. He had spent twenty years in Colombo as a British civilian. He got very much interested in Hīnayāna. In the evening at the Conference there was a discussion on problems of world society. The moderator was Susanne K. Langer. She managed the discussion very well. One Professor W. Higginbotham, Nuclear Physicist, outlined the possibilities of destruction and said that the mind of man could solve them. Professor Karl Polanyi, the Hungarian economist, asserted that economics is not everything, that market economy, supply-demand mechanism was a fiction. Professor John Collier spoke about co-operation between the philosopher and the social scientist. Professor Blandshard agreed with Collier and said that much depended on that doubtful entity, the statesman. Dr Brightman observed, 'For Socrates knowledge is virtue; for others virtue is knowledge; for science knowledge is power; and for Gandhi virtue is power.' At breakfast the next day, the 29th of December, I happened to meet Mr. Gerber of the State Department. He spoke about my Upaniṣad selection published by Messrs. G. A. Natesan. I was surprised that this obscure publication had come to his notice. There were more papers that day. One was on 'Purpose and Causality' by Professor Krikonan and another by Professor Erwin Briar on 'Physical time.' The latter paper was mostly unintelligible. The Chairman asked the audience in the middle 'How many understand?' In the afternoon I was asked to speak. In a brief speech I conveyed the greetings of the Philosophers of India and pleaded for greater co-operation.

The following was reported in the proceedings of the

American Philosophical Association, 1948 and 49, 22nd Annual Report. 'The greetings and good wishes of the Philosophers of India were given to the Philosophers of America by Swamy Mahadevi of the University of Madras and Cornell University.'

It will be seen that this report made me a 'swami' and turned my name into Mahadevi (feminine) !

On the 30th December I left Charlottesville for Washington D.C. The capital of the United States appeared to me to be a pretty city with avenues named after the constituent states, for example Pennsylvania Avenue, Massachusetts Avenue etc. I was shown round the city and taken to important places such as the White House ; the Washington Monument, Will Rogers statue etc. The guide informed us of his remark 'Let me be placed where I can have an eye on the House of Representatives' ; Pan American Union Quadrangle which was covered with sliding glass-roof, housing tropical plants and trees, a large variety of parrots ; capitol Hill, whose basement we were told contained the largest corridor ; Library of Congress ; Smithsonian Trust ; Mint Building ; here we were informed, that the currency notes were counted and checked mostly by women employees. One of the visits I enjoyed was to the Howard University where I met Dr. Amiya Chakravarti. I also had a meeting with Dr. Nelson who was the Dean of the School of Religion. I called on Sir Benegal Rama Rau who was then Ambassador for India to Washington. One of his brothers I had known in Madras. The Ambassador was very courteous. He invited me to an evening party. I spent some time in the Library of Congress. One Dr. Poleman took me round the Library. He as well as his wife were Sanskrit scholars. On the night of the 31st December I was in Washington when the Church-Bells ushered the New Year. On the 4th of January I left Washington for Philadelphia. I heard the taxi man say,

'Mr. Gandhi was one of the world's best men, why on earth should any one kill him? He was good to everyone.' Reaching Philadelphia that afternoon I went to the Benjamin Franklin Hotel where accommodation had been reserved for me. Svāmī Yatīśvarānanda came to the Hotel that evening at six. I had known him in Madras when he was for many years President of the Rāmakṛṣṇa Maṭh. I was now meeting him after fifteen years. After having dinner together we walked to the Independence Hall and the City Hall. The next evening I went to the Svāmī's Vedānta Centre, and at his invitation spoke in his Chapel on '*Vedānta and the West*.' At the end of the talk many questions were asked, one of which was how Vedānta could combat church-narrowness. The next morning the Svāmī and I strolled around for a while. I noted that the streets were named after trees: Pine, Chestnut, Wallnut, etc.; while walking together the Svāmī noticed that my shoes were dull and dirty and insisted that I should have them shined. This is a defect in me which I have never been able to overcome.

On the 6th of January 1949, I left Philadelphia for New York. After a few days' stay there, I went to Boston where an old friend of mine, who had been in Madras as Professor of Economics but was teaching at Boston Theology, received me at the station and took me to his house to be his guest. He showed me the various important places in Boston. The old city near which the Pilgrims Fathers had landed, the river Charles with its tributary 'Mystic'; we went to Harvard (City of Cambridge); I was shown round the various Departments of the University. There is what is known as Harvard Yard. The University has no campus. We went to the Emerson Hall where the Department of Philosophy is located, met Dr. Sorokin, Professor of Sociology, and had a brief talk with him. He said that he was interested in Yoga and

that at the time he was writing on altruism. I learnt that he was a Russian who had come to America in 1926.

On one of the days of my stay in Boston my host took me to the Capital City Hall. A clerk there said that we should see the Mayor Hon. James M. Purley l(Ex-Governor of Massachusetts). He was very informal and communicative. About Gandhi he remarked ' He was one of the great men of the century.' He also referred to the visit of Vithalbhai Patel in 1932. He had arranged public meetings for him as the speaker of the largest parliament in the world. He asked us to sit in the Mayor's chair and sign the visitor's book. He took us to the hotel opposite for lunch and showed us the medal given to him in 1948 for fifty years of public service.

On the 13th of January we had lunch with Svāmī Akhilānanda at his Rāmakṛṣṇa Vedānta Centre. He had invited quite a few academicians ; Dr. Brightman was one of them, who asked for books on Vedānta. He said, no American philosopher was an expert in Indian philosophy because language stood as a barrier.

The next day in the morning I took the Greyhound for New York. We travelled through the country ; each town looked like any other ; we passed through Hartford, New Haven (Yale) ; and at New Rochelle near New York I saw old fashioned tram-cars.

That night along with some friends I listened to a lecture by Lady Rama Rau. She traced the history of the all-India Women's Conference of which she was President in 1947.

I visited the Columbia University and Dr. Schneider who was Professor of Philosophy. I saw the statue of the thinker placed in front of the Philosophy Hall. Dr. Schneider said, that the Humanities and Philosophy had not suffered as a consequence of the Second World War. Fearing that this might have been the case, a committee was constituted to

travel the country and make investigations. Their findings showed that the contrary had happened.

On the 20th of January I had an interview with Dr. J. H. Holmes in his hotel apartment. He recalled his visit to India, and to Madras, and its hot weather. He described that the location of the University was beautiful and that he liked 'University-folk'. He met Mahātmā Gandhi who had asked him to meet him again, but he said he could not. He said that he had met the Mahātmā in London during the Round-Table Conference and advised him to put on more clothes against the weather. He wondered how Gandhiji could manage very well in that country with very little clothing.

From New York, I returned to Ithaca on the 22nd January. The Second Series of talks was on Vedānta. The first talk was given on the 15th February 1949, and the concluding talk on the 26th April. The following were the topics of the ten talks :

1. 'That Thou Art'.
2. The Finite and the Infinite.
3. Knowledge and Non-knowledge.
4. An Analysis of Experience.
5. The World—A Dream.
6. Nothing Whatever is Born.
7. Reality and Illusion.
8. A Critique of Difference.
9. The Two Ways : Work and Wisdom.
10. Vedānta and the West.

As during the first semester, so during the second, I was invited to address meetings, participate in group-discussions, etc. I shall relate some of them here seriatim. One day Professor Burtt invited some of the students to his apartment and me too. There was a discussion of 'How is it possible to synthesise Eastern and Western Culture?' The problem was, if you took certain ideas away from their context,

would they not suffer? Professor Burtt explained what was meant by profiting by other cultures. Asking the question, what was wrong with Western Culture, he replied it was too secular, emphasised speed and rush without aim. The Universities stress quantity of work rather than quality and that no time was given for reflection. In this context Professor Burtt and one of the students remarked that I was the only person in the Campus who was not seen to be rushing.

I attended with Professor Burtt a Quakers meeting one day. What I observed was this : There was first group-meditation. Chairs were arranged in a circle, the members sat in them and meditated. After an hour one gentleman stood up and prayed, 'Master, what must I do to inherit eternal life? There are two Masters, whom should I serve?' After some time, another stood up and said, 'Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.' After some more time, a young man rose up and dwelt on the significance of the trial of a student who had refused to register for the draft. He said, the friends had to face this problem. At the end of the meeting each one shook the hands of the next. At last a lady stood up and spoke on the conference they were having that week-end.

Professor Cunningham had written an article in the Philosophy Journal published from Cornell on 'How far to the Land of Yoga.' His point was that Indian philosophy stressed yoga and Western metaphysics had nothing to do with it. Provoked by this, I offered to read a paper at the Philosophy Club meeting. I gave the caption to my paper 'Within us the Land of Brahman'. Professor Cunningham and others took part in the discussion. What troubled them was Self-realisation. I tried to show them that the concept of Self-realisation was not extra-philosophical.

On the 6th of April 1949 Ithaca Radio, D.H.C.Y. invited Professor Burtt and me to take part in a discussion on India.

The Directress of the Radio, while introducing me, remarked about my not having any note-paper. This seems to have struck the fancy of quite a few people while I was in America. The questions that were asked were about the status of women, their part in the freedom struggle ; prospects of democracy, etc. I answered these questions to the best of my ability. Those who were present said that the replies had come over the Radio clearly and that my voice seemed suited for the Radio. Professor Burtt too had made a similar remark regarding my voice which, according to him, fulfilled ' radio-voice ' requirements.

Between Tuesdays and during short holidays I made brief trips to other places. In March 1949 I went to New York, had an interview with Mrs. Pearl S. Buck and recorded chanting of the *Gītā* for Ethnic Folkways. From there I went to Washington. There was a meeting at the International Students' House where I spoke on India's quest for Truth. There was a lively question and answer session. The discussion centred round problems such as the distinction between the mind and spirit, how the many came from the one, the technique of yoga, etc.

In the same month I travelled to Philadelphia. This time I visited the museum of Art where I saw a *maṇḍapam* from Madurai restructured from pieces brought from that city. The purpose of my present visit was to give a lecture at the University of Pennsylvania at the invitation of Professor W. Norman Brown. The lecture was on ' Theory and Practice of Yoga.' The hall fixed for the lecture had to be changed because more people than were expected had turned up. I was struck by the interest in India which the public evinced. I explained the philosophy of classical Yoga, the various steps involved in the Yoga discipline and the goal of Yoga. There were questions as usual after the speech.

Having completed my assignment at Cornell, I left for a

tour of the country on the first of May 1949. I went to Buffalo by train. A taxi driver took me to the bus terminal in order to go to Niagara. The driver of the taxi entered into a conversation with me. He asked 'From India', I replied 'Yes'.

'Going to School?'

'No, lecturing.'

'You're an educated man, eh?'

I went by bus to Niagara. I saw the falls after finding accommodation in Niagara Hotel. Such enormous quantity of water being discharged, I had not seen anywhere earlier. The next morning I walked up to the Rainbow-bridge and crossed it and passed through the customs to the Canadian side, to see the falls from there. I walked down the path there and sailed through the falls in the boat 'The Maid of the Mist' after putting on rain-coat and cap. The next day I went to Toronto and visited the University Campus where an Indian friend doing medical research took me to the room where Insulin had been discovered by two researchers, Bantum and Best. On the 4th of May I boarded the train to Chicago where I was guest of the University. I was accommodated in what is called Disciples' Divinity House. I gave a lecture at the University on 'The Message of Indian Philosophy.' At the end of the speech, one Mr. Carter, connected with the preparation for the Goethe Bicentennial Convocation, met me and invited me to participate in it. I agreed to this invitation. Subsequently he gave me the formal letter of invitation. What struck me as the most moving spectacle was Lake Michigan which I was told is three hundred miles long and about ninety miles broad. Svāmī Vishvānanda, Head of the Rāmakṛṣṇa Vedānta Centre there, sent one of his students to take me to him in his station-wagon. I was taken along the Rivershore Drive which remind me of the Madras Beach. The Svāmī inquired

about Madras and praised that city for discovering Svāmī Vivekānanda. It will be remembered that it was at Chicago that Svāmī Vivekānanda spoke at the Parliament of Religions and became instantly the hero of the Parliament.

On the 8th of May I left by train from the Union Station for St. Louis. I took a sight-seeing bus, the driver was explaining things to the passengers. He said that in the park opposite the Union Station there were statues representing the rivers Missisipi and Missouri and other tributaries, that St. Louis was the third biggest manufacturing city and the eighth largest city in the United States.

That evening I left for Austin by train. While I was waiting on the platform, an American who was there at some distance sent some money through a waitress who asked me if I was taking collections. I said 'no' and did not accept the money. I arrived at Austin the next morning. Professor Williams was there with a friend to receive me and drove me to the hotel where accommodation had been reserved. My lecture at the University was in the evening. I spoke on 'What Freedom means to India'.

On the 8th of May, one Mr. Stassey, President of the Junior College in Cisco, came with a friend and took me in his car to Cisco about two hundred miles away, for a lecture to be given in that College. We reached the place before noon that day when one Mr. Eugene Langford joined us. He remarked, 'expected to see a big man'. There was a luncheon meeting of the International Association of the Lions' Club at which I addressed the members on 'India: Her Internationalism and the need for Universal Peace and Understanding'. At the Junior College in the afternoon I spoke about educational ideals and the need for a spiritual outlook. On the next day I was taken to the airport which was about fifty miles away where I boarded the plane for Albuquerque. Professors Alexander and Bahm received me

and took me to the University Campus. I noticed that the buildings were constructed after the Pueblo style. That afternoon I spoke to Professor Bahm's class. He was giving a course of Oriental Philosophy. I gave a lecture at the University that night on 'Whither Civilization'. After the lecture, a group of professors and students came to Professor Alexander's house where I was staying. The discussion with them continued until late in the night. On the 13th of May Dr. Bahm took me out for sight-seeing. We went to Zia Indian's Pueblo. According to the previous census there were two hundred and eighty-eight Red-Indians in that reserve. We entered into several houses. I was told they had all become Catholics but retained their old rituals and all of them spoke English. We had a drive for about two hundred miles. We saw Jemez Springs sulphur deposits, Los Alamos, Santa Fe, Colorado Monument, etc. We went into Kiwa and saw the urals depicting rain-rituals. We returned to Albuquerque, had Mexican dinner in old Albuquerque which consisted of dishes that were like Indian preparations. I left by train that noon and arrived at Los Angeles the next morning. One of the 'boys' of the Rāmakṛṣṇa Vedānta Centre, met me. I drove with him to the Hollywood Temple and was well looked after by the inmates who were *brahmacārins* and *brahmacāriṇis*. As Svāmī Prabhavānanda was away in Santa Barbara, Mr. Gerald Heard preached at the Temple that forenoon. His theme was 'The Second Adolescence'. The Svāmī returned in the evening. I had known him earlier in Madras. I conversed with him for a while and after dinner; at his instance I gave a talk to the inmates explaining the difference between Indian and Western Philosophy, how the former was not only theoretical but also practical, how it had maintained alliance with religion, how it analyses states of experience other

than waking and how Indian Philosophy is a philosophy of values.

Town Hall, Association of Businessmen at Los Angeles, had asked me to give a talk to the members on May 16th 1949. In the announcement-folder circulated to its members the following was stated ; ' India, the larger of the two nations now occupying the sub-continent on Asia's Southern flank, occupies a position of importance in today's world and will continue to do so in the future. Although India has elected to stay in the British Commonwealth of Nations, she is now an independent nation, and free to pursue her own objectives internally and internationally. It is timely that the May 16th meeting of Town Hall should be devoted to a discussion of the world aims of independent India. ' This folder goes on to mention me as the speaker and gives my bio-data.

Svāmī Prabhavānanda drove me on that day to Baltimore Hotel. One Mr. William B. Miller received us, and, after luncheon, introduced me to the assembled businessmen who were over two hundred in number

The Government of Indian Information Services, Washington, issued a brief report of the speech under the Caption ' Promotion of the World Peace, Indian's Foreign Policy '.

' Independent India is as eager to participate in every aspect of international affairs as any other country ', said Dr. T.M. P. Mahadevan, Head of the Dept, of Philosophy, Madras University, addressing a Town Hall audience in Los Angeles recently.

At present the Visiting Professor at Cornell Dr. Mahadevan described the re-birth of India as an independent nation after years of non-violent struggle under the leadership of Mahātmā Gandhi He said, ' India's future policy has been made clear by the Prime Minister, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru on many occasions. The policy was that India would, while keeping aloof from powerblocks, help the cause of world

peace. This has in some quarters been interpreted as isolationism which it is not,' the Professor remarked.

'Dr. Mahadevan added "The hope of the future, according to India, lies in the successful working and strengthening of the United Nations Organisation. Any step that would contribute to this end would be welcome to India and receive her whole-hearted support."'

The meeting closed with a question and answer session. In the afternoon that day the Svāmī took me to Santa Barbara about eighty miles away. The place is on beautiful hills where Sarada Convent for the training of girl-renunciates is located. The site of the Convent is a lovely garden overlooking the Pacific and commanding a fine scenic view. The girls asked me to explain the difference between Indian Philosophy and Western Philosophy. One Dr. Brown who joined us had been in India and was then teaching in a College. He asked questions about Indian Philosophy and Religion, particularly about Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism. We returned to Hollywood the next day.

On the 18th of May Svāmī Yatīśvarānanda arrived. The next day both the Svāmīs and other friends along with me went to Trabuco (about seventy miles), a hilly region, where Mr. Gerald Heard had an institution meant for retreat and meditation. He had decided to give it over to the Vedānta Society which would make it a monastery. We returned to the Hollywood Temple, at 8'o clock in the night where I gave a lecture on the 'Philosophy of the Upaniṣads'.

On the 20th the Wattumulls (of the Wattumull Foundation) who live in Los Angeles invited me to their home to meet a group of friends whom they had invited. They introduced me to the invitees. Mr. Watumull spoke highly of the Vedānta Society speech. He said that he had missed the talk at Baltimore Hotel but had heard accounts of it from friends who told him that the glory of India and her

spirituality had come out in a convincing manner. I spoke to the group on how Indian Philosophy is misunderstood in the West. There were questions as usual which I answered.

On the 22nd of May I left Los Angeles for San Fransisco. There I was received by a lady disciple of Svāmī Ashokānanda, Head of the Rāmakṛṣṇa Vedānta Centre, and taken to the hotel where accommodation had been reserved. The next day, I went to the Vedānta Society and saw the Svāmī. Svāmī Yatīśvarānanda arrived there on the 24th of May. We drove to Berkeley over the Bay-bridge which, I was told, was the longest in the world with two decks, the upper for cars and the lower for trains and trucks. We saw the Berkely Centre of the Vedānta Society. In the night after dinner I gave the Forster Lecture on the 'Hindu View of Eternal Life', at the University Auditorium. The term of the Lecturership which had been established in 1928 by Miss Edith Zweybruck in honour and memory of her sister and brother-in-law, was that in each academic year at least one lecture be given on the immortality of the soul or some kindred spiritual subject by an authority specially qualified and specially appointed. The central point that I developed in my lecture was this : while in religions like Christianity and Islam the soul is considered to be born but immortal, in Hinduism the soul is said to be eternal, *i.e.*, beginningless and endless. A day after the lecture an American student studying Sanskrit met me and said that Professor McKay, in his class talking about the Foerster Lecture, was remarking to his class 'There seem to be Platonic ideas in Hindu Philosophy', to which one of the students replied, 'There are Hindu ideas in Plato'.

On the 26th of May along with Svāmī Yatīśvarānanda and two others I went by car to Yasomite Valley about two hundred and fifty miles away and saw the Redwood trees which, we were told, were three thousand and eight hundred

years old and some of them were three-hundred feet tall. We saw the trunk of one tree scooped out so that cars could pass through it. This was an unforgettable experience.

A student of Fine Arts at Cornell had written to a friend of his in San Fransisco informing him about my visit to that place. This person was working as a taxi driver. He came one day and took me out, drove me to a promontary facing the Pacific Ocean, stopped his car and began discussing Vedānta, wanting to know the way. He posed a problem : ' Suppose a passenger in my cab gets out of it placing in my hands a five dollar bill forgetting to receive the change. Should I call him back and give the change ? This small money may not mean much to him, but to me with a struggling family it may be of some relief. ' In reply to this question I told him that if he read the *Gītā* he wouldfind the answer. Arjuna's problem was not dissimilar. He was prepared to fight with and kill others but not his own kith and kin. He adopted two standards of morality. Addressing this young American friend I asked, ' If your passenger had been a friend or a relation would you have thought of cheating him ? ' The answer seemed to satisfy the young man.

Before leaving the United States, I had to participate in two Conferences : (1) The Goethe Bicentennial Convocation at Aspen, Colorado, and (2) The Second East-West Philosophers' Conference in Hawaii.

The convocation opened on June 27th and went on till July 16th. There were lectures, and during the latter part of the Convocation there was a music festival. A special feature of the meeting was that Dr. Albert Schweitzer came to America for taking part in this Conference. He gave a lecture in French on ' Goethe : His Personality and His Work. ' The speech I made was entitled ' Western and Eastern Thought '. The following brief report of the speech

appeared in a popular Madras daily : 'Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan, Head of the Department of Philosophy, Madras University, speaking at the Goethe Bicentennial Convocation at Colorado on July 4th made a plea for greater understanding between the East and the West. Dr. Mahadevan referred to the teaching of Mahātmā Gāndhi and said that the spirit of nationalism that had led to India's independence 'was quite different from the one which created the independent nation-states in Europe by overthrowing the Papal Empire of the Holy Roman Church.'

The Second East-West Conference was held from June 28th to July 28th. The architect of the Conference was Professor Charles A. Moore, Chairman of the Department of Philosophy, University of Hawaii. The Conference was dedicated 'to the search for greater mutual understanding between Eastern and Western Philosophic traditions and to the effort to discover avenues of progress towards a significant synthesis of the ideas and ideals of the Orient and the Occident.' The paper that I presented at the Conference was on the 'Basis of Social, Ethical and Spiritual Values in Indian Philosophy.' Dr. C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar was also there for a few days and his paper was on 'The Philosophical Basis of Indian Legal and Social Systems.' Ten years later, the Third Conference was held to which also I was invited. This time the theme was 'Philosophy Culture' —East and West. The paper that I presented at this Conference was on 'Indian Ethics and Social Practice'.

At the end of the 1949 Hawaii Conference I left for India, stopping on the way for three days in Bangkok, Thailand. I spoke at the Thai-Bharat Lodge on 'India and the World'. Bangkok appeared to me as a quaint and nice city with a river-system and boat-traffic. There were many temples for Buddha. I visited the temple of the Emerald Buddha and saw the murals on the Rāmāyaṇa. One of the pictures

particularly fascinated me. It represented Hanumān stretching himself between India and Śrī Lanka serving as a bridge. Leaving Bangkok, I went to Rangoon. I was the guest of the Rāmakṛṣṇa Mission where I delivered a couple of lectures. I flew from Rangoon to Calcutta and from Calcutta returned to Madras by train on August 18, 1949.

A most valued acquaintance I made in Hawaii at the Second Conference in 1949 and the third in 1959 was the one with Dr. D. T. Suzuki, the well known Zen teacher. During the 1959 Conference I suggested to him that he should visit India. He was past ninety then. He took my suggestion and a few months later he came to Calcutta and from there to Madras where I received him at the University. I was so happy that he came to Madras and that he visited India which he loved so much.

15

Before and After

Some time before leaving for America, the Central Y.M.C.A. in Madras arranged for ten lectures on the *Bhagavad-gītā*. I was taking weekly *Gītā* classes for a couple of years at two places : (1) At the Free Hostel for College Students run by Śrī Chennamalleśvara and Śrī Chennakeśavaperumāl Devasthānam ; (2) At the Sārasvat Association. At the latter place, Mr. and Mrs. Benegal Sanjiva Rau were regular in attending the classes. Sometimes Mrs. Sanjiva Rau's father too came to listen to the discourses. When Sri J. Krishnamurti happened to be in Madras during one winter, Sri Sanjiva Rau was particular that I should meet him, and arranged for an interview. He took me and introduced me to Sri Krishnamurti. In the course of the conversation I told him that I found some similarity between his teachings and certain aspects of Vedānta as taught in the *Upaniṣads*.

In those years I used to give at the University ten Extension Lectures each year which were open to the public. In January 1948, I chose as my theme the ' Doctrine of Māyā '. In those lectures I attempted to explain what the concept of Māyā really means and how Śrī Aurobindo was mistaken

in his criticism of the concept and of Śaṅkara. One of the friends who regularly attended these lectures was a retired Professor of English Literature who subsequently became the Editor of the Collected Works of Mahātmā Gandhi in New Delhi. He is a Gandhian greatly attached to the person and principles of Mahātmā Gandhi. The last lecture of this series was given on the 30th January 1948. After the lecture, he went home and listened to the radio which announced the assassination of Mahātmā Gandhi, that evening. He later on said to a common friend and also to me personally that but for the lecture on *Māyā* he would have collapsed on hearing the news.

In 1951, *i.e.*, two years after my return from America, we shifted our residence from Egmore to a New Colony (Venkatesapuram) in Ayanavaram, which is in the North-Western end of the City of Madras. At this new place Svāmī Rājeśvarānanda held periodically *Sat Saṅga*. It was attended by some devotees. I started a weekly class on the *Bhagavad-gītā*. Besides, every year we arranged for a five-day celebration of Śrī Śaṅkara Jayanti.

Mā Ānanda Mayī, a lady saint of the North was to visit Madras in 1952. The devotees who made arrangements for her visit asked me to write an article about her for publication in the newspapers in order that the public in the South might know about her. This is what I wrote : 'Mother Ānandmayī, who is shortly visiting Madras, is one of those rare experts in God-love and God-vision who, in the words of *Nārada-bhakti-sūtra*, make holy places holier, deeds good and righteous, and scriptures authoritative. In the hearts and minds of pious people all over North India, she has gained a unique place as the healing, soothing and sanctifying Mātā.

'Born in the year 1896 in a Bengali village, Mā Ānandamayī grew in simple rural surroundings, without any formal

education. She was twelve when she was married to a saintly person. No house would, however, contain her. Quite early in her life, divine manifestations began to appear in her body, especially when listening to *kīrtan*. Moods of abstraction were common to her even in those tender years, the concerns of life did not concern her. While engaged in cooking, for instance, she would pass over into a state of pure consciousness, unruffled by the passage of time and undistracted by the things of the world. The light could not be kept under a bushel for a long time.'

'At Astagram, when she was barely eighteen, her spiritual ministry may be said to have begun. The Motherhood in her began to be recognised by those who came into contact with her. Later, she moved to Bajitpur and Dacca, and various types of *sādhana*—those of *yoga*, *tantra* and *vedānta*—appeared in her person, absolutely unsought and uncultivated. She had no formal initiation or *dīkṣa*, no external Guru. Spontaneously, at the appointed time, the various spiritual experiences occurred to her. Her *pūjā* was out-of-the-ordinary and supernormal. One deity after another would issue out of her body, complete with all associates, and after worship would merge into her body. There would be no external material of worship. She would feel at the time of worship, that she herself was the God, the worshipper, the *mantra*, the auxiliaries and everything connected with the worship. Hymns and *mantras* used to flow from her lips automatically, even as, we are told, they sometimes do now. Devotees began to pour in from all sides from the time of her stay in Shahbag, Dacca. In 1932 Mother left Dacca with her husband, only in the conventional sense of the term, but really her chief disciple and spiritual son, and with Bhaiji, an ardent devotee. They stayed for a time at an old Śiva-temple in a quiet village called Raipur near Dehra-Dun.'

'Now, Mother moves about from place to place bringing spiritual succour to the distressed and scattering divine aroma everywhere. She does not step into private homes, but likes to stay in *dharmaśālās* and temples where everyone can have access to her and claim her as his or her own. She does not eat with her hands, but has to be fed. Referring to this, she once said : "I look upon all hands as my hands." I do take food with my own hands. Devotees meet with all sorts of supernormal experiences in her presence. But she says, referring to herself : "This body is always in the same mood, without any change whatever ; your attitude alone leads you to consider any particular phase ordinary or extraordinary.... This body is like a drum ; just as you will beat it, it will produce a corresponding sound. I find that there is but one playful master-tune ringing through the whole universe."'

'When Mother was about eighteen years old, almost the first devotee who came to know her, said once, addressing her : "Today I am the only person to call you Mother ; but know this, a day will come when the world will call you Mother". It is as the Universal Mother that she is looked upon by every one that comes into her presence. She herself adopts the attitude of a child towards all. It is this childlike nature coupled with divinity that makes for the sweetness and light that constantly emanate from her. In the words of Bhaiji, "Wherever Mother goes, her presence carries an exquisite sweetness pervading the thoughts and ideas of people flocking around her. Whatever might be the nature of one's thoughts, one feels quite pleased to find that one's mind gets purified and refined by her subtle influence."'

'Though not learned, Mother tackles every problem posed before her exquisitely and reveals a profound understanding of the deepest and most knotty questions of philosophy and life. In 1929, when the Indian Philosophical

Congress met at Dacca, the visiting philosophers went to see her. Adverting to this experience, one of them says : 'The discussions lasted for three hours and all kinds of questions, mostly philosophical, were put ; and Ānandamayī was ready with answers spontaneously and immediately. There was no hesitation, not the least conscious thinking, not the least sign of nervousness in her. Her answers hit directly the point, free from the metaphysical technique. The whole assembly enjoyed her keen intelligence, ready wit and eloquent expressions.'

'Several educationists have found light in her. One of them observes : "Before Mother Ānandamayī,our mind and intelligence retire baffled and overwhelmed. In her presence we feel like one standing at the foot of the mighty Himālayas with higher and higher peaks spreading out in endless panorama before our vision in their bewildering beauty and variety." Recalling his first meeting with Mother, a Mahāmahopādhyāya declares : "I can only say that what I actually saw with my own eyes far exceeded anything of the like nature I had ever seen before ; it was a dream, as it were, realised in life." '

'Mother identifies herself with all ; *sarvātmabhāva* is a natural trait of hers. She knows no distinctions of high and low, rich and poor, the elite and the masses. When a devotee once said, "Mother, open your treasure chest for us," she replied "It is ever open for all". Referring to the salutations offered to her by others, she once remarked, "Who salutes whom? You bow to your own Self." '

Mā Ānandamayī arrived in Madras on October 27th 1952, and stayed here for a few days. In the evenings large gatherings went to see and listen to her. She did *bhajan* which was soul-stirring and after that she addressed the gathering in Hindi, which I translated into Tamil. Subsequently when I used to visit Vārāṇasī in connection with the work

of the Banaras Hindu University, an old student of mine who was a member of the staff of the Philosophy Department took me every time to Ānandamayī Āśram, the Head Quarters.

In the summer of 1956, some of the devotees who were attending our spiritual meetings suggested that we should go on a pilgrimage to Badrināth (Badarīnātha or Badari keśvara). Badrināth is one of the four holy places referred to as *Chārdhām*, the other three being Purijagannāth, Dvārakā and Rāmeśvaram. It may be remembered that Lord Kṛṣṇa, towards the end of his earthly life, advised Uddhava after giving him his last message, 'Go thou, O Uddhava, to my *āśrama* at Badri' (*gaccha uddhava mayādiṣṭaḥ badaryākhyam mamāśramam*).

Our party consisted of about a dozen members including Svāmī Rājeśvarānanda, my aunt, and me. We travelled to Delhi by train. From there again to Haridvār by train; after a short stay there, we went to Rishikesh where Svāmī Śivānanda made our sojourn comfortable. He gave every assistance in connection with our journey to Badrināth. On the eve of our leaving for the Himālayan pilgrimage he convened *Sat saṅga* and gave his blessings. In those days there was bus transport up to Peepalkoti. The motor-bus goes along the right bank of the Ganges, called Alakananda, on the mountain, and at a certain point there is a change and the road runs along the left bank. The route is picturesque and fascinating with high mountains on the one side of the road and on the other side the river gushing deep below through gorges. Once one leaves Rishikesh, one forgets the outer world completely. It is a holy world one is now travelling through, always thinking of the goal which is Badrināth. On the way several tributaries come and join the Alakananda. The places where there is such confluence are called Prayāg. At Devaprayāg, the river

Bhāgīrati joins the Alakananda. Tradition has it that Lord Rāma performed *tapas* there, after kiling Rāvaṇa. At Rudra-prayāg the Mandākinī meets Alakananda. The sight of the silent blue waters of the Mandākinī mingling with the rushing and roaring waters of the Alakananda is a marvellous one. Those who want to go to Kedārnāth have to turn here and proceed along the banks of the Mandākinī. Then, comes Nandaprayāg where Nandākinī joins Alakananda. The bus road stopped at Peepalkoṭi from where pilgrims had to walk. (Now the road goes up to the Badrināth temple). From this place the distance to Badrināth is about forty miles. The path was not even. One had to ascend mountains and descend into valleys. For Svāmī Rājeśvarānanda we arranged a chair and for my aunt a basket. All the rest of us walked the distance. It took about five or six days to complete the journey. There are rest-places on the way called *chaṭṭis* where pilgrims could spend the night and also have chappatis and tea. These facilities are available at convenient distances. We took our time walking slowly and enjoying every prospect. At a distance of twenty-three miles from Peepalkoṭi there is Joshimaṭh. This is the Jyotirmaṭha established by Ādi Śaṅkara as the Northern Pīṭha. We visited the Maṭha and the gardens where we were amazed to see plenty of apple-trees, heavy laden with many apples and plants with large roses too. This is about six-thousand feet above sea level. During winter the entire township of Badrināth shifts to this place. This is the summer headquaters of the Rawal Saheb (Nambūdiri priest of Badrināth). There are quite a few temples here, one for Jotirliṅga Mahādeva, one for Vāsudeva, one for Aṣṭakālī. There is also a temple for Narasimha Śāligrāma. It is believed that Ādi Śaṅkara installed the Śāligrāma. During the winter months *pūjā* to Badarinārāyaṇa is offered here. On the hill where the Jotirmaṭh is situated there is a cave under a huge tree

(said to be more than two-thousand years old) in which Śaṅkara is stated to have performed *tapas*. After Joshimaṭh we went to Viṣṇu-prayāg where the Viṣṇugaṅgā joins Alakananda. One has to cross the river here by a narrow suspension-bridge high above a gorge. Both the rivers are ferocious. Facing the confluence, there is the mountain Hāthīparbat. The name of the mountain is apt because it is like an elephant kneeling down. Then we reached Pāṇḍukeśvar which is also called Yoga-badri. There is an old temple here whose construction is attributed by tradition to the Pāṇḍavas. In the last lap of the journey, we had often to walk on ice and ice-bridges over streams. Then we halted at Hanumān-chaṭṭi, and from there it was a steep ascent, and when we walked round a rocky bend we saw the Holy Badrināth in a green valley below, surrounded by snow-capped mountains on three sides. Badrināth is slightly over ten-thousand feet above sea-level. As we were descending to the valley, we heard pilgrims crying out ' Vishāl Badriki jai ! ' (Victory to Badrināth). The temple is the most prominent and attractive building in the township. There are small shops of all sorts catering to the needs of the pilgrims. We were accommodated on the first floor of the guest-house opposite the temple on the edge of Alakananda. After a short rest, we had our bath in the hot spring (tapta-kuṇḍa), also opposite the temple. The hot water is a divine blessing in that cold place. We were told that the temperature of the water is about one-hundred and twenty-five degrees Fahrenheit. Bathing here was brazing as well as refreshing. After bath, we went into the temple. The Rawāl Saheb performed *pūjā* and explained that the idol which is naturally formed appears differently to different people : As Nārāyaṇa to Vaiṣṇavas, as Śiva to Śaivas, as Śakti to Śaktas, as Buddha to Bauddhas. This idol was recovered from the river-bed by Śaṅkara who installed

it in the temple. When the temple is closed for the winter the *pūjā* is handed over to sage Nārada whose idol is to be seen opposite the principal Deity. The temple is situated between two mountains which are called Nara and Nārāyaṇa. Near the temple on the banks of the river, there is Brahmakuṇḍa where people render offerings to their ancestors. With a member of the party, I ventured to go beyond Badri up to the water-falls called Vasudhārā. On the way, there is Keśava prayāg where the river Sarasvatī joins Alakananda. Near the place there are two caves facing each other. One is called Vyāsaguhā and the other Gaṇeśā-guhā. The tradition is that Vyāsa dictated the *Purāṇas* to Gaṇeśa here. In this area, there were large stretches of land blanketed with the small tulsi plants whose aroma was enthralling. On the banks of the Sarasvatī, there is the temple of Mātā-murti, the Mother of Nara and Nārāyaṇa. Here is Māna which is the last village on the Indian soil. Two miles from the temple of the Mother, are the grand Vasudhārā-falls. The waterfalls are frozen during the night, but as the day advances they melt and go down in great volume to join Alakananda. It is believed that this river comes from Kubera's Alakāpurī. On the mountains that range on the opposite bank of Alakananda here, there is shown a path which is called Svargārohaṇa—the way by which the Pāṇḍavas with Draupadī are stated to have ascended to Heaven. From Nanda-prayāg up to Sarasvatī the region is divided into four sections : Sthūla-badri, Sūkṣma-badri, Tataḥ-sūkṣma-badri and Śuddha-badri, corresponding to the four stages of perfection, *viz.*, *sālokya*, *sāmīpya*, *sārūpya* and *sāyujya*. The region from Badri to the river Sarasvatī is regarded as Śuddha-badri.

We stayed in Badri for three days, visited the temple both morning and evening, and we started our return journey on

the fourth morning. At the moment of our leaving Badrināth there was an unbelievably splendid sight of the Nīlakaṇṭha peak which rises behind the Badrināth temple to a height of twelve thousand feet. It can be seen only when the clouds move away. This blessing happened when we were about to leave. The peak is all white except for one or two dark patches below the top, which makes the name meaningful, the Lord with the blue throat. There is not much to say about our return journey. We came to Delhi and from there to Madras.

Early in 1957, I fell seriously ill, and had to stay in bed for nearly four months. A devoted couple, the Venkataramans, *bhaktas* of Śrī Ramaṇa Maharshi, came to attend on me. My aunt was already very old and found it difficult to manage the house-hold. A few years later she died. Some years thereafter Svāmī Rājeśvarānanda attained *siddhi* at Ramaṇāśramam. We have constructed a *samādhi* at the place where he is buried and have made arrangements for the annual performance of *ārādhana*.

A spiritual seeker who was of very great help during the illness is a teacher from France. She was teaching mathematics in a French School in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia). As she was attracted by Indian culture, she used to come to India during summer vacations. On one such visit, she came to Madras. Someone in the hostel where she stayed seems to have mentioned my name. She came to see me. I found her to be a serious student of Vedānta interested in *sādhana*. Soon after coming to Madras she managed to get a transfer to Pondicherry which was then a French possession. She was teaching mathematics there and used to go to Tiruvaṇṇāmalai for week-ends or come to Madras. During my illness she came twice a week to attend to my needs. Some years later she wanted to learn Sanskrit, and leaving the teaching of mathematics, she turned to study the Śaiva

Āgamas at the French Indological Institute in Pondicherry. She married there a Professor of Philosophy who happened to go there from Switzerland. She got permission from the Indological Institute to continue her work in Switzerland, visiting periodically Pondicherry for guidance and further work. She is now a recognised authority on Śaiva ritual and has contributed valuable papers to Oriental Conferences. The professor of philosophy has also come down several times to Madras and stayed for shorter or longer periods to get acquainted with Vedānta at the Centre for Advanced Study in Philosophy. They built a beautiful house in Switzerland in a village outside Neuchatel commanding a fascinating view of the Lake there. They waited for my visit to give a name to their house. The house is called now Śāntinilayam.

I have already stated that after shifting to North-West Madras, we started having weekly *Gītā* classes and celebrating Śaṅkara Jayanti every year. After a few years I thought that it would be good to have a separate institution for Śaṅkara. Accordingly a building was constructed very near my residence on the parallel road ; it is called Śaṅkara Vihār and has been made into a private trust. Regular activities are being conducted there. The institute functions as a Centre for Vedantic Study.

16

Two Organisations

(1) *Indian Philosophical Congress*

The Indian Philosophical Congress is an association of the Teachers of Philosophy in India. It was founded in the year 1925 by Professor S. Radhakrishnan and others. The First Session of the Congress at Calcutta was presided over by Dr. Rabindranath Tagore. The Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Congress was Dr. Radhakrishnan from the very beginning. Sri S. S. Suryanarayana Sastri was General Secretary from 1931. When I was doing research under him and also subsequently, I used to go with him and attend the Sessions of the Philosophical Congress. The First Session that I attended was in 1932 at the University of Mysore. In 1934 at Waltair I took part in a symposium on the 'Place of God in Advaita'. In 1937 when the Congress met at Nagpur Dr. Radhakrishnan wanted to have a change in the Chairmanship. He made Professor A. R. Wadia the Chairman. Sri S. S. Suryanarayana Sastri who was the Secretary wanted an assistant secretary to help him. He suggested my name, and it was accepted. When Sri Sastri passed away in 1942, I was made the General Secretary, which post I held until I left for America. The

First Session after I took over the Secretaryship was held in Lahore in 1942-'43. The then General President of the Session was Professor P. N. Srinivasachari who, it will be remembered, was my Professor at Pachaiyappa's College. Every year when I went to North India in connection with the Session of the Philosophical Congress, a close friend of mine used to accompany me. We usually broke journey at Wardha and spent a day at Sevāgrām to attend Mahātmā Gandhi's prayer-meeting early in the morning and accompany him along with a group on the evening walk. In 1950 the Silver Jubilee Session was held at the University of Calcutta. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan presided over the Session. I was invited to preside over the Ethics and Social Philosophy Section. My Address was on 'Beyond Ethics'. The central point of my Address was that if one was confined strictly within the frontiers of ethics one ran into the danger of getting bogged and missing the life-giving air of the free land of the Spirit. In 1952 at the Mysore Session I was one of the principal symposiasts in the Symposium on 'Can there be Ethics without Metaphysics'. My position was that without metaphysics, ethics would be without any stable basis. I was elected General President of the 30th Session of the Indian Philosophical Congress at Nagpur in 1955. I chose as my theme 'The Re-Discovery of Man'. The 'Hitavāda' of Nagpur wrote the following editorial on my Presidential Speech :

'*The Re-Discovery of Man*'

'A famous Russian thinker once proclaimed that in this age we know how to fly like birds in the air, how to swim like fish in the water, but we do not know how to live on earth like men. There has been a plethoric growth of knowledge simultaneously with the stunting of wisdom. Knowledge has been prostituted for selfish ends and science has become

the handmaid of power-politics. All the atom-smashing sky-flashing discoveries of science have made the dangers of total annihilation more real than ever before. The demon of materialism controls the world. Dr. Mahadevan asked in his presidential address to the Philosophical Congress : Is happiness or wisdom to be measured by the number of things we own, or the power we have acquired over the elements ? We have embraced a civilisation without being civilised. The real crux of the matter is that man has no inner life.'

' Dr. Mahadevan made a broad survey of the history of philosophy from ancient times to show that the study of questions relating to the inner life and the art of " turning the eye inward " were rare even among the philosophers. Particularly he dealt at some length with Existentialism, a recent philosophical trend in Europe. Existentialism, he pointed out, is a personal philosophy primarily concerned with man. According to this school of thought, man has mistaken himself for a natural specimen of a "thing", whereas his "essence" lies in his existence and hence he cannot be understood in terms of categories. Dr. Mahadevan mentioned that even the existentialists did not go inward enough, though they realised the need for inwardness. He also dwelt on the benefits that the cultivation of the " inward look " may confer on science, and referred to the development of polybiology or polypathology in America. He pointed out that in pursuing the inward path, it must be remembered that inwardness is not the attitude of the introvert as against that of the extrovert ; it is not egocentricism and it is not subjectivism, for the true Self is the ground of both subject and object. The same Self appears as the individual and as the world and this is to be realised by the method of "inward search " or " yoga." '

' Diagnosing the present ills of the world, Dr. Mahadevan

emphasised that the greatest illness that afflicted the modern man was excessive outwardness, with the result that he has become his own enemy : Not by adding things to oneself could one be happy, because true happiness lay within. Happiness is a state of the mind and though it is conditioned by external circumstances, it is not entirely dependent upon them. For getting happiness what we most need is a philosophy of life, a spiritual rehabilitation of the materialistic-minded self. Philosophy has played a very great part in India's national life, and particularly in the Gandhian era it became to some extent a way of life. But now with the shooting progress of science a new sense of values has come into being. It is time we reappraised our present values in the light of human happiness—the *summum bonum*—and evolved a new code of conduct which would facilitate the achievement of the objective.'

In 1956 the Ministry of Education of the Union Government asked me to attend the 3rd Session of the Pakistan Philosophical Congress at Peshawar as the Union Government's Delegate.

I gave a lecture at the Conference on 'The Concept of World Philosophy'. The following is a newspaper report on the lecture :

Dr. Mahadevan's Analysis:

Peshawar April 23. In the course of a Public Lecture at Peshawar in connection with the recent Session of the Third Pakistan Philosophical Congress, Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan, Professor of Philosophy, University of Madras, said that almost all the major trends in philosophy were to be found in every area of the world, East or West. It was lack of understanding that was responsible for the longitudinal or latitudinal divisions of thought, he said.

'We are right in the age of one-world, whether we recognise it or not, Dr. Mahadevan said. "The modern media of communication" and the recent weapons of destruction have brought us together; and it is no longer possible for the peoples of the world to ignore one another. The future of humanity will depend largely on world understanding and on readiness on the part of the nations to appreciate and share the experiences and traditions of one another. It is here that the philosopher can play his legitimate role. If anywhere, it ought to be easy in the realm of pure ideas to bring about an attitude of sympathy and willingness to learn. The philosophers of the world should take the lead in the reordering of men's outlook, in the re-adjustment of their attitude towards one another.'

Continuing, he said 'At the East-West Philosophers' Conference held at Hawaii University in 1949, which I had the honour of attending, the participating philosophers discovered at the end of six weeks of deliberations that there was neither East nor West in Philosophy. Almost all the major trends in Philosophy are to be found in every important area of the world, East or West. It is ignorance and lack of understanding that are responsible for the longitudinal or latitudinal divisions in thought.

'One stereotyped philosophy for the whole world, however, is neither necessary nor desirable, he added. But it is quite essential that there must be a world-perspective in our philosophising. In order to make such philosophising fruitful, I recommend the following five principles: (i) freedom from prejudice against other philosophies; (ii) endeavour to understand them with sympathy and insight; (iii) Openness to the right type of influence from them; (iv) effort to organise one's ideas from the widest possible perspective; and (v) active participation in the good life of the whole of humanity."

'If we philosophers remember these principles in the performance of our task, he said concluding, "we shall be making a major contribution to the ushering in of a new harmoneous world".'

In 1975-76 the Golden Jubilee of the Indian Philosophical Congress was held at the University of Delhi. It was a seven-day conference. Departing from the custom of having one General President, one of past Presidents was chosen for each day of the Session. I presided over the third Day's Session on 'Vidyā and Avidyā'. The theme of my Presidential Address was based on the Upaniṣhadic distinction between two kinds of knowledge, the higher (*parā*) and the lower (*aparā*).

(2) *Union for the Study of the Great Religions*

One winter morning in 1950 in Dr. Radhakrishnan's room at Oxford, a few of his friends, including Professor H. N. Spalding, met and discussed what they could do to make the modern younger generation conscious of higher values. They decided to start a Union of the Study of the Great Religions. They defined the objective of the Union as the effort to promote ethical, philosophical, and religious education and culture through the study of the great civilizations of the East and the West with a view to foster better social and international understanding between the peoples of the world and to ensure their spiritual life. A central committee of eminent leaders was formed at Oxford. They decided to constitute a council of eminent men in different countries. The Union, through such councils, was to work on a basis of local autonomy, with area secretaries and committees, backed by local members of the council concerned, working to further the general aims of the movement in whatever manner was best suited to the area's culture, needs and financial resources.

At the instance of Dr. Radhakrishnan, Professor H. N. Spalding wrote to me suggesting that I should take the work of organising the Union in India, as Area-Secretary. I accepted the task, as promoting interreligious understanding is very much after my heart. I lost no time in getting to work on this project and the first Seminar was organised in 1952 at Bangalore in collaboration with the Indian Institute of Culture there. The theme set for the Seminar was 'The Great Scriptures'. Exponents of the various scriptures were invited to present papers, and Dr. Radhakrishnan, who was then vice-President of India came especially to Bangalore to inaugurate the Seminar. In his inspiring speech he said that religion was the fulfilment of man's life, an experience in which every aspect of his being was raised to its highest extent. 'What is needed is a change of consciousness,' he said, 'a re-born-ness, an inner evolution and a change in understanding'. Defining the aim of the Union for the Study of Great Religions, he said that it did not wish any religion to compromise or capitulate and that it wanted to treat all religions as friendly partners in the supreme task of nourishing the spiritual life of mankind.

I presented at the Seminar two papers, one on the *Upaniṣads* and the other on the *Bhagavad-gītā*. Here I shall reproduce a newspaper report of my lecture on the *Gītā:*

'On the third day of the Seminar on the Study of the Great Religions, this morning at the Indian Institute of Culture, Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan gave an enlightening discourse on the *Bhagavad-gītā*.'

'The speaker stated that the *Gītā* was the most popular scripture of India. It was not a sectarian gospel, but it was universal in its appeal and all-comprehensive in its content. The *Upaniṣads* constituted the source of the *Gītā*.'

'Dispelling certain misgivings in the minds of Western thinkers, he said that it was wrong to think that the *Gītā*

was an exhortation to violence. War was not very important in the *Gītā*, but it constituted an epic background. The context of war should be taken figuratively and as an analogy.'

'The crisis in which Arjuna found himself on the morning of the first day of the battle of Kurukṣetra was typical of many a human situation. Arjuna was not opposed to war as such. He was against killing *his* kinsmen. The Teacher of the *Gītā*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, began his discourse by pointing out that to *distinguish between one's own people and others was the root-cause of all social injustice and spiritual fall.*'

Dr. Mahadevan stated, the *Gītā's* teaching might be studied under the three aspects of philosophy, religion and ethics, corresponding roughly to the three Yogas of *jñāna, bhaktī* and *karma*. Those were complementary paths to the goal.

'The philosophy of the *Gītā* was the same as that of the *Upaniṣads*. Of the unreal there was no existence, and of the real no non-existence. The supreme reality was the Self which was eternal and unchanging. It was *Ātmā-brahman*. Creation was *māyika*. By crossing *māyā* one realised the Self, one would go beyond the *guṇas* and become firm in wisdom.'

'To realise the Absolute was not easy. One must prepare oneself by constant devotion. Religion disciplined one by making the mind one pointed. God might be conceived in a variety of ways. A philosophic theism would accommodate all modes of worship. The Omnipresent might be approached from different directions. Although anthropomorphism was inevitable, one must outgrow it. The purpose of all religious forms was to turn the mind of man Godward. The descent of God (*avatāra*) fulfilled the same purpose.'

'Dr. Mahadevan, concluding, said that true devotion required freedom from egoism. The mind must become clean and pure. Dedicated service was the way to cleanse the mind. *Ethical life consisted of the performance of one's duty without any selfish motive.* It was true that one would

not work without an end in view. But the plurality of finite ends must be replaced by the single end of God or self-realisation.'

The inaugural speech of Dr. Radhakrishnan and all the papers contributed to the Seminar were published in a Volume bearing the title ' The Great Scriptures '.

The Second Seminar was held in 1956 in Madras. The theme of this Seminar was ' The Saints '. Representative saints of all religious traditions constituted the subjects of papers presented at this Seminar. The enthusiasm of those who read papers and of those who listened to them was so great that provision had to be made for extra-sessions. The choice of the particular saint was left to the speaker concerned. For both the content and form of each paper the author had the full responsibility. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan was expected to inaugurate this Seminar also but he was not able to be present at Madras for the meeting. He sent a paper which served as the Opening Address. ' I am keen ' he said 'that the followers of the different religions should understand one another and interpret other religions at their best and promote a spirit of harmony. In a world haunted by fear and torn by strife what is needed is a spirit of tolerance and understanding, not a mere grudging admission of other religious views, but a glad recognition of the variety of the human mind.'

Besides the papers on the saints there were public lectures by the then Governor of Mysore, Sri Jaya Chamaraja Wadiyar, Dr. Leon Roth, Mr. K. D. D. Henderson, Secretary of the Coordinating Committee U.S.G.R., Oxford. All these were published in a Volume bearing the title ' A Seminar on Saints '.

The First paper ' The Role of Saints ' was contributed by Svāmī Ramadas who was himself a saint. The opening passage of his paper is worth quoting : ' Saints, incarnations and prophets come from age to age in different lands to deliver

the message of Unity, harmony and peace for the regeneration of mankind. They sow the precious seeds of universal love and brotherhood.'

I shall end by citing a passage from Mr. Henderson's lecture : ' We cannot change human nature in a year or two or a century or two, but the world is thirsty for a new message. One radical change is that the Western mind has turned its probe inward at last, bringing a different technique to bear on discussion long familiar to the East, and also coming to realise the limitations of its narrow fields of sensory perception.'

The third Seminar which was held in 1963 was at Annamalai University. Dr. C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar who was then the Vice-Chancellor made every arrangement for making the Seminar a success. The topic set for the Seminar was ' Language and Religion '.

Inaugurating the Seminar Dr. C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar observed : ' The present age is described by great thinkers as " an age of crisis of the individual soul ".'

' Anyone travelling in Europe or in America today will not fail to realise that people in those countries are thirsting for religion and spiritual knowledge, more than ever. They are beginning to think that something is lacking in human endeavours which can be satisfied only by religion.'

Referring to the theme of the Seminar, he said that language and religion which were wedded in a remarkable way had played a distinguishable adventure in unifying the human mind.

The Seminar was held for five days. There were papers on the different aspects of the relation between language and religion in the various religious traditions. There were also public lectures on themes like ' Mystical Symbolism in the Āḻvārs ', ' Songs of the Siddhas ', ' The Place of Religion in Education ', etc.

17

Athens Meeting and After

In 1966 I was invited by His Majesty King Constantine to participate in what was called ' The Athens Meeting '. The idea of the Athens Meeting was an inspiration of His Majesty the late King Paul who was the founder and first President of the Royal National Foundation. The purpose of the biannual Athens Meeting was to provide an opportunity to prominent world thinkers and scientists to proclaim from the rostrum of Greek wisdom the Hill of the Pnyx, the ideals and aspirations of the contemporary man. The first Athens Meeting was held in 1964. The late King Paul had been planning for the Second Meeting in 1966. His premature death, made his son and successor arrange for the Second Meeting in 1966 which was held from May 30th to June 5th. We were six invitees from different parts of the world, each giving a lecture on one day, on the subject of his choice.

Greece is my favourite country in Europe. Ancient Greek history was one of the subjects I studied in the intermediate course at College, and in my Philosophy studies I was greatly attracted by the teachings of Socrates and Plato. My visit to Athens, therefore, had a special fascination for

me. There was an opportunity for seeing places about which I had read so much, such as the Acropolis, the Agora, Delphi and Sounion.

The guests were cordially received and looked after with great courtesy and care. The Athens Meeting was inaugurated by King Constantine at the Acropolis on Sunday the 29th of May. The lectures started from the next day. Mine, which was on the 'Heritage of India' was on Wednesday June the first. When I was on the Pnyx facing the Acropolis, memories of the old orations on the hill came to my mind. There was a slight drizzle before the lecture started, but it stopped quite on time. Besides the royalty, there was a huge gathering to listen to the lecture.

Before the date of the lecture, a message was sent to me by Her Majesty Queen Frederica, Queen Mother, if I would like to have an audience with her. I gave my consent and the audience was duly arranged. The Queen Mother was already familiar with the teachings of Ramaṇa Maharshi. Since the Maharshi passed away in 1950, she wanted to know if there was any sage living whom she could meet. I replied that according to the best of my knowledge there is His Holiness the Śaṅkarācārya of Kāñcī who is revered by thousands of people as a great sage. Then she asked some questions about meditation to which I gave answers. One particular question was whether it was possible to concentrate the mind on the Highest with noise all around, especially on the streets nearby. I said that it was possible if meditation is combined as an auxiliary to Self-inquiry. During my stay in Athens I met the Queen Mother and her youngest daughter quite a few times. I had given them copies of *Daśaśloki* which had been published during the Śaṅkara Jayanti that year. It consists of ten verses in Sanskrit in which Śaṅkara declares the nature of the supreme Self. The Princess who had read

the book asked me a doubt during one of the meetings. It was in regard to the second line of the tenth stanza which is as follows : *na vā kevalatvam na cākevalatvam* (there is not for it absoluteness nor non-absoluteness). The precise difficulty felt by her was this : to say that there no non-absoluteness for the Self is all right but if this be so how can it be also non-absolute ? If it is not non-absolute should it not be regarded as absolute ? My answer was the expression ' absolute ' has meaning only as long as there is the concept of ' non-absolute '. If there is not non-absoluteness then there is no point in saying that it is absolute. The case in regard to other expressions such as ' non-dual ' (Advaita) is the same. If there is no duality at all, then to refer to the Self as non-dual is pointless.

After the week of lectures on the Hill of the Pnyx, we (the visitors) were taken out on excursions to historic places in Southern Greece. Subsequently we went on a week's cruise to the Aegean Islands. Each island was different and yet represented some aspect of the Greek culture.

A few months later, I was pleasantly surprised when I was informed that Her Majesty, Queen Frederica, Queen Mother of Greece, and Princess Irene were coming to India to meet His Holiness the Śaṅkarācārya of Kāñcī. They came to Delhi and from there by a special Railway Coach to Madras. His Holiness at that time was camping at Kālahasti, about eighty miles North-West of Madras. We went there and the royal visitors had interviews with His Holiness on the 4th and 5th of December 1966. On the first day His Holiness was seated on the floor near a column of the corridor in the court-yard of the temple. There was a couch placed opposite to him, presumably intended for the royal visitors to sit on. But this did not enter into their minds at all. When the place where His Holiness was seated was pointed out, they immediately squatted before him. The following

is the gist of the interviews on those two days. —The questions asked by the royalty and the instructions given by His Holiness :

Q. : Your Holiness ! I am able to meditate with a measure of success while awake. But, the meditative experience does not come in dreams. What should be done to retain this attitude in the dreams also ?

A. : One need not worry about the kind of dreams one has. One who practises meditation in the waking-state, may not, when he goes to the dream-state, experience the meditative attitude. The dreams may relate to non-spiritual phenomena. But the spiritual seeker should not be troubled over these ; he should not think that such dreams constitute an impediment to his spiritual life. To think so, and to be troubled mentally would be an obstacle. What the seeker should be careful about is the waking life. He should devote as much of it as possible to the spiritual quest. If his endeavours in the waking state are in the direction of the Spirit, then gradually in dreams also one's spiritual nature will be reflected.

It is not dreams that affect the waking life ; it is the other way about. One who is fair-skinned in waking-life usually dreams of himself as having fair skin in dreams. If he has dark-skin, in dreams also he has similar complexion. Thus, it is the experiences of waking state that get reflected in dreams, although in odd and queer forms. So, if the aspirant is vigilant in his waking state, and strives constantly to remember the Self, gradually in dreams also the same attitude will get reflected. If he succeeds in rendering his waking-life free from violent passions and base desires, in course of time his dreams also will become placid and full of peace.

Q. : Will your Holiness be pleased to prescribe a technique by which the concentration and equanimity of the mind may be facilitated ?

A. : Normally one breaths through one of the two nostrils, right or left. It is possible to change the breathing from one nostril to the other by effort. If the breathing is through the right nostril, and if it is to be changed to the left, what one should do is to put pressure on the right side of the body, which could be done by resting the right palm on the ground and making the body lean on that arm. For a change from the left to the right, the pressure should be put on the left side. Before the actual change takes place, the breathing would be through both nostrils for a short time, say, two seconds. This is what may be called equalised breathing. If one practises to observe the equalised breathing, its period will become longer and longer. And, the equalised breathing will facilitate the gaining of mental balance and equanimity. The more one practises this, the greater will be the progress in achieving the balance of mind, and the ability to remain unperturbed.

Q. : If the surroundings are not salutary, if there are people who are hostile to one's mode of life, if everywhere one sees evil and wickedness, what should one do ?

A. : One may be surrounded by wicked people who are treacherous and evil in their ways. But one should not be impatient with them or show hatred towards them. On the contrary, one should have sympathy for them, and compassion. No person is wicked by nature, but circumstances and upbringing make him so. There is no reason, therefore, to hate him for what he has been made into. And also, an aspirant should not have hatred for anyone. He should reason thus : ' Since the wicked person is so because of circumstances and upbringing, he is to be pitied rather than hated. What would I do if some one whom I hold dear, say,

my son, turns to evil ways? I would strive to correct him through love. Even so should I treat the stranger. In fact, there is no stranger for a truth-seeker; for all are his kindred. What should be my plight if I had been born and bred in those evil circumstances? I too would be behaving in a wicked way. So, let me see the same Self in the wicked man; let me not hate him.

Q.: What is the distinction between the *savikalpa* and *nirvikalpa* stages in *samādhi*? And, what is *sahaja-samādhi*?

A.: *Savikalpa* and *nirvikalpa* are stages in the path of concentration and meditation. In what is known as *savikalpa-samādhi*, the mind is steady without any distraction, contemplating its object wholly absorbed therein. In *nirvikalpa samādhi*, which is the goal of *yoga*, the mind ceases to function, and vanishes once and for all, leaving the Self to shine forth alone. In Advaita too the path of meditation is recognised; but here the object of meditation is the distinctionless *Brahman*. What is called *sahaja-samādhi* is realised through the path of inquiry. It is the natural state of Self-realisation and one of utter unconcern for the fleeting phenomenon.

Q.: What should a leader do in regard to customs and usages, etc.? Even after he finds them to be not of any benefit for himself, should he follow them?

A.: Those who are the leaders of a group, society, or state, should not neglect the established religious customs and usages. For themselves, they may not be in need of church-ceremonies, for instance, their advance in spirituality may not require these. But if they begin to neglect them, the people for whom the rituals are really helpful will also start neglecting them. This would be setting a bad example. In the words of the *Bhagavad-gītā* 'The wise one should not unsettle the mind of those who are ignorant, and are attached to action; on the contrary, he should encourage them to

perform what they should perform, by himself doing the appropriate actions well and with diligence'. It is the duty cast upon the leaders and those that are at the top to lead the people from where they are, and not to refrain from participation in the traditional ways of worship.

Recording the indelible impression of the interviews and the unique blessing gained by the *darśana* of His Holiness, Her Majesty observed thus :

'The two days we spent in his company will never be forgotten. There was pure spirituality. What strange fate has brought us close to him !'

Expanding on the same impression, and reminiscing on what has been aptly described as the meeting with Perfection, Her Royal Highness says :

'Since some time now I find myself in a situation where there are no more questions to ask (except for details). Yet identification with the Self is far from constant. Nevertheless the practice of application will also contribute in making it more permanent so that there is really no problem. Then I believe that Fate brings things when the time is ripe. And what came as Fate's great gift was this meeting with Perfection whose blessing is more than I am able to cherish without being deeply moved.'

'He mentioned that the astronauts must have experienced outwardly that which is usually felt inwardly by spiritual seekers—an outer mystic experience. We had the Grace of having both the outer and inner mystic experience in His person and we are thankful for it. He appeared as the vivid link between spirit and matter, a link (for the seeker) which showed that they are not separate. The world of appearance with this Sage, who quite obviously was a guest in the frail body, was there, but the Essence, that with which the guest is identical, was there too, demonstrating that the world is not different from it. His gaze made the Self cast off all the bonds

of the ego, thus unveiling a pure reflection of what those eyes are identified with. How can the beauty of this be witnessed with dry eyes ? '

' The greatness of His blessing was so immense that this human container was incapable of holding it without its overflowing which resulted as tears. Tears of utter fulfilment which washed away the container, causing it to dissolve, for a while into the Reality He symbolises.'

The next year they came with two other members of the family. We went by a special coach to Masulipatnam in Andhra where His Holiness was camping. All the visitors had the privilege of seeing His Holiness on the three days they were there. Subsequently they have come with more and more members of the family to have the benefit of seeing the Sage and also to visit Śrī Ramaṇāśramam.

At one of the visits there were as many as twenty-one members belonging to three generations, all of them—even the little ones enthralled by the august presence of the Sage.

After a few years the Queen Mother and the Princess began to live in Madras to attend my lectures at the University and also to listen to my discourses at Śaṅkara Vihār. The last visit of the Queen Mother was in 1980. After three weeks' stay in Madras, she went to see His Holiness who was camping at Miraj (Maharashtra) before leaving Bombay for London.

There is a very wrong impression abroad that when one who is not born a Hindu is interested in its highest philosophy gets converted to Hinduism. Of all the major religions of the World, what is referred to as Hinduism does not believe in conversion from one formal faith into another. All the scriptures, right from the earliest, proclaim that all paths lead to the same goal. As several of even the modern spiritual leaders have declared, the object of Vedānta which is the quintessence of Hinduism is to make a Christian a better Christian, a Muslim a better Muslim and so on. The Queen

Mother wrote a paper describing her last visit to the Sage in April 1980. The following passage which occurs in the article will clearly show how in the light of Vedānta, a Christian will be able to understand some of the aspects of Christianity with a deep insight and great clarity.

'The car takes me through some green fields to a small temple dedicated to Ganesh, the Elephant God. The afternoon sun is still very hot when I enter the gate and my bare feet hurt while walking into the courtyard. One or two attendants recognise me and lead me to a raised platform upon which has been erected some kind of shed. It is meant as a store-room for the temple. I see the Sage's figure seated against that half-open door of the shed. I bow and raise my clasped hands over my head. He is in total silence since several weeks. A practically invisible smile acknowledges my presence. I seat myself on a thin mat. It is spread out over what feels to be a very hard cement floor. My legs are crossed under me. We look at each other in silence. A number of over-eager devotees are crowding in on us. With an authoritative but gentle gesture they are summoned to pay their respects and then they are dismissed. We are alone. The silence increases. It turns into an inner power that throws out all thoughts from my mind. Awareness of the body and its surroundings dissolves within an awareness that is its own self. Consciousness is a flame without fuel. It is self-sustained, bodiless, mindless and without emotion. It is free of all attributes, not to be reached by words and thoughts. It is perfection, unmarred by opposites. It is the stillness that knows no questions about life and death, good and evil. It is wisdom without the acrobatics of the intellect. It is eternity without the measure of time. It is the great now without past and future. It is the soul come home. It is the Father and Son made one.'

'Why did Adam and Eve lose Paradise? It must have been because thoughts arose within the infinite consciousness and imagined themselves separate from the ground of their own existence. Consciousness divided itself, as it were, into separate beings and travelling through the whole range of evolution finds itself as the human consciousness looking and searching for an identity which it never lost and which it always was. Just as the drops in the sea are always the sea, so our consciousness is always part of the absolute. It is only when we identify with our individual consciousness and find conceit therein that error appears and duality establishes itself as it were. It is at this point that Adam and Eve saw themselves as separate from God and Paradise was lost. Error builds upon error until it has become a near unbreakable habit. Intellectual discrimination, mystic meditation and to be in the vicinity of the sages help to break the error and re-establish the truth.'

18

Some Conferences and Conventions

Besides the Conferences which have been referred to already I shall here give an account of some of the other Meetings I attended, participated in, or organised.

(*i*)

UNESCO Round Table Discussion (1951)

UNESCO arranged for a Round Table discussion on the cultural and philosophical relations between East and West in New Delhi on the 13th to 20th December 1951. Inaugurating the discussion Dr. Radhakrishnan observed : 'Here we are assembled, representatives of the East as well as of the West, to join hands in the great work of building bridges between peoples on the plane of mind and spirit.' Indicating what had to be accomplished, he said, 'The world is unified physically but is mentally divided. We all live, whether of the East or of the West, in what has been called 'the contemporary approach'. It is our task to produce normal balanced individuals in whom the mind and the outer life are reconciled.'

In a paper that I submitted, I made the following points: Civilizations cannot be really divided into two fields. Many

countries close to each other geographically have different civilizations.

If there has been a clash between East and West, it is not because of conflicting cultures but because of the particular manner in which the meeting between them took place.

The East-West problem is one primarily of adapting means to ends. The means dominate in the West usurping the status of ends. The East lacks the means wherewith the ends of man could be accomplished.

Understanding between the East and the West, in fact, international understanding is urgently needed. One civilization is not called for, but what is required is a recognition of basic unity. There is a common experience which gives birth to the diverse cultures. The methods that should be adopted to bring this experience into the conscious level in the mind of communities should be similar to those that obtained in ancient times where there was cultural commerce, say between India and Greece or between India and China.

The East has a different concept of man than that of the West. A synthesis of the two contrasted concepts is desirable. Though from the standpoint of spiritual absolutism man's reality is the Spirit as considered in the East, it nevertheless should be recognised that on the plane of relativity man is spirit *plus* mind *plus* body. It should be borne in mind that the ultimate reality is not the individual ego but Spirit which has kinship with other spirits, according to theism, and which is identical with all according to absolutism.

Education should not only be informative but should aim at human excellence as well. Education should build man's body, enlarge his mind, and enrich his soul.

The following may be included as items framing a scheme of education for every citizen of the world :

(i) There has been, in recent times, an indiscriminate craze among students for the physical sciences. This has

no bearing, however, on the advancement of science. Science, it is thought, ' pays ' and so it is popular. In order to offset this ' cash view ' of education, the humanities must be encouraged. Every student must be made to go through a course in general education in which the humanities should have their legitimate place.

(ii) The Eastern students are now learning the sciences which have come from the modern West. But they should also be made to learn the basic concepts of Western culture. Similarly, the Western students should be given every opportunity to acquaint themselves thoroughly with the fundamental ideas of Eastern cultures.

(iii) In order that the various courses a student goes through may be co-ordinated and held in a right perspective, there should be required a course in the Philosophy of Man. Here, contributions of different cultures to the integral view of man may be taken into account.

Education is a life-long process. Although formal education may come to an end after a period, real education can come to a close only when man attains his perfection. Education's task is not merely to provide for the training of executives and technicians ; its ultimate purpose should be to create ' whole ' men.

(*ii*)

European Forum, Austria (1962)

In 1962 Professor K. A. Nilakanta Sastri and myself were invited to participate in what was called European Forum. An institution in Vienna was arranging every year at some convenient place in Austria a sort of Seminar-camp for students. That year the camp was held in Alpbach, a little Alpine village. The scholars who attended were divided into several groups. The group for which an Austrian Professor Dr. Vereno and myself were asked to be co-directors was

assigned the theme '*Dogmatic Theology of the West and Non-dogmatic Religions of the East*'. Although Alpbach is an out-of-the-way village on the Alps, it had all the amenities required for a conference. The hotel in which we were accommodated was all built of wood and we enjoyed living there. The Conference-hall was also similarly constructed but it had all the facilities including simultaneous translation into three languages, German, French and English. Professor Nilakanta Sastri and I used to have our strolls in the early mornings and evenings and we liked very much the rural surroundings. The sound of the bells of the cattle in the evening returning home was very sweet and soothing. We thoroughly liked our stay in Alpbach which lasted for several weeks.

The plenary meetings were held in the mornings. They were supposed to begin at 8 o'clock. In India we used to think that Europeans are very punctual, but Sastri and I found that we were the only persons in front of the hall five minutes before 8 o'clock. Apart from the plenary meetings, each group met separately and we gave a series of talks both, Dr. Vereno and I, on religions of the West and of the East. The scholars were deeply interested and the discussions were often lively. In my paper presented at the Forum I dwelt the non-dogmatic character of the Eastern religions. I pointed out the urgency of interreligious understanding especially in this epoch where we have such power for destroying each other owing to disagreements.

After dwelling on the different religious attitudes towards God, creation, etc., I emphasised their common aspiration for the Holy and the Eternal.

Uniformity in faiths is not necessary, according to Indian spirituality. While most other faiths do not recognise others' faiths as being equally potent in bringing man to his final spiritual goal, our sages since ancient times have understood and proclaimed that the Ultimate End can be reached by any

number of ways and that God may be addressed by many names. I gave examples of great men like Aśoka and Mahātmā Gandhi who were universal in their approach to faiths. Then I showed that the inward trend is not to be found only in the East, that it is also seen in the great mystics of the West, and also that in our tradition world-denial has been misinterpreted ; what we deny is the limited conception of the so-called world. Duty to fellow beings comes from a recognition of our basic identity with others.

If dogmatism has been kept at bay in our tradition, it is because of the continued relation between philosophy and religion ; thus the individual is free to enjoy the mode of worship most suited to him.

All religions, however, agree on basic principles of ethics. The schools of spiritual thought in India, be they orthodox or heterodox, all have the principles of ideal conduct referred to as *pañcaśīla* : non-violence, truth, non-stealing, self-restraint and refraining from misappropriation. So, in the sphere of spiritual morals we find harmony whether we look to the *Bhagavadgītā* or to the *Sermon on the Mount*.

Even though we have come closer to each other owing to the modernisation and speeding up of travel, etc., we seem far apart in the mind. I traced this paradox to the inner chaos prevailing in the hearts of men. The only remedy is to turn to religion in the true sense of the term. We must gain insight into the Holy and find a profounder answer to life's problems. We must, of course, guarantee physical basic comforts without which most people cannot even begin to look to the spirit, and at the same time we must recognise that mere physical comfort is not an end in itself. It has become clear that it is most valuable to meet and make a joint-study. As a result we will realise that religion as such is an insistent invitation to exalt our life and progress spiri-

tually for our own benefit and for the benefit of those surrounding us.

After the session was over, we were taken on a trip to Salzburg. On the way there were several villages with their quaint looking houses having mural paintings and with beautiful flowers on their balconies. At Salzburg we visited the place so important in Mozart's life. From there we returned home.

(*iii*)

Cultural Visit to West Germany (1963)

In 1963, the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany) invited me along with an academician from Kerala to visit that country for a fortnight under the exchange programme for University Professors. The visit was from August 5th to 19th. We were received by a representative of the Government and our programme was arranged in a way that we could see important places and have a comprehensive idea of the different aspects of German culture. Our itenerary started with a visit to the University Library at Bonn. And we visited the University as also the INTERNATIONES organisation. We were then taken to an official lunch offered by the Press and Information Office after which we visited the Permanent Conference of the Cultural Minister, the German Academic Exchange Service and the West German Vice-Chancellors' Conference. From Bonn, we flew to Berlin where among others we visited the Director of the Department of Indian Art. We were also taken out for a sight-seeing tour of West Berlin and a tour along the sector border. Here Dr. Von Hartmann acting chief of the Information Centre of the Senat von Berlin gave us a luncheon on August 9th. The next day, we were taken for an inspection of the German Foundation Building for Developing Countries. We visited also the Zoological Gardens and the

Aquarium, all of which impressed us greatly. The next place of visit was Munich. The visit to the Zoological Institute interested me greatly. The Professor who took us round showed us the 'animal room' where prominently on one of the walls was written the *Upaniṣadic* passage 'That Thou Art' (*Tat Tvam Asi*). When I asked the Professor what the purpose of this inscription was, he replied that it was to make his assistants and students realise that animals are not to be treated as lower creatures, that the Reality was the same in both animal and man. We enjoyed greatly our excursion to the Bavarian Alps, and also the visit to the Indological Institute. We went to Stuttgart on the 14th and the next day to Tuebingen. We visited the Indologishes Seminar where Dr. Thieme, Professor of Sanskrit, received us. I learnt that he was interested in Sanskrit Grammar and when we took leave of him after a fruitful hour with him he said, '*Punar-darśanāya gamyatām*,' which is the exact Sanskrit translation of the German 'Auf wieder seen'. On the 19th we left the country for Frankfurt with very pleasant memories of a marvellous visit to a country which is known for its culture and interest in Indology.

(*iv*)

Indian Council for Cultural Relations and Indian National Commission for Co-operation with UNESCO (1969)

An International Conference on Central Asia was jointly organised by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations and the Indian National Commission for Co-operation with UNESCO. It was held on February 11th to 15th 1969, at New Delhi. This took place as a part of the UNESCO Project for the study of the civilizations of Central Asia.

The purpose of the UNESCO Project was to make better known the civilizations of the peoples of Central Asia through studies of their Archaeology, History, Science and Literature.

The region covered by the UNESCO Project and by the Conference included the countries of Afghanistan, India, Iran, Pakistan and the USSR.

The main theme of the Conference was 'Movement of Peoples and Ideas between the Countries from Pre-historic Times to the Modern Period'. Within the theme, the history of ideas in Central Asia received special attention in papers and discussions at the Conference.

At the end of the Conference, there were identified five main priority-themes of study under the project. The fifth theme was 'History of Ideas and Philosophies in Central Asia'. This work as assigned to India. The Centre of Advanced Study in Philosophy, Madras University, which was selected as the co-ordinating institution for the priority-theme on the History of Ideas and Philosophies, undertook to carry out a preliminary study. As the then Director of the Centre, I prepared a report, with the assistance of a special scholar appointed for the purpose, and submitted it to the Indian National Commission for UNESCO.

(*v*)

Institute International de Philosophie 1971 (*Mashad* 1975)

The I.I.P. which has its Headquarters in Paris, consists of members selected from the various countries of the world. I was elected member of the Institute in 1971. The Institute met at Mashad, Iran, from the 1st to 8th September 1975. I was invited to participate in the meeting. Besides taking part in the discussion, I presented a paper on 'Indian Philosophy : A Great Reconciler of Religion and Science'. A summary of the paper is given hereunder :

At the commencement of what is known as the modern period in Western thought, philosophy sought to align itself with science by breaking away from religion. The reason for this was that during the Middle Ages in Europe, Philosophy

had become the handmaid of theology, and with the rise of science in the seventeenth century signifying the claim to the right of free enquiry, it wanted to follow the lead of science in the hope that certainty in the field of knowledge would be reached by thought that had been freed from prejudices and misconceptions. This spirit of science brought about the separation between philosophical enquiry and theological beliefs. The advocates of religion at the time reacted against this trend. So European philosophy starting with Descartes wanted to liberate itself from the stranglehold of Church-Theology.

This break never took place in India. So this leads a large number of Western savants to believe that India never had a proper philosophy because it was always linked with religion. When for the Indian, philosophy is not limited to the rational interpretation of the nature and constitution of reality it does not mean that there is no place for such thought in Indian tradition. Indian philosophy simply tries to transcend rather than deny. As Ādi Śaṅkara, the Great Teacher of Advaita makes it clear, that which is accepted or believed in without sufficient enquiry is not only bad philosophy, but also prevents one from reaching the goal of perfection. But it must be applied in two ways : in accepting the intuitive experience of the sages as also to test the validity critically ; and the other is to start on the stormy quest by oneself and discover through the critical reason what is to be offered. The goal of experience in both cases is believed to be the intuition of reality. A combination of listening to the scripture, reflection on it and meditation is called for in this quest.

Indian philosophy is as much concerned with certification of fact and value as is the Western Philosophy. India however takes all three experiences of waking, dream and deep sleep into consideration. And, if there is uncontradicted

evidence for a plenary state transcending the three empirical states, there is no reason to reject it as impossible.

As regards value, Indian Phliosophy is essentially a value-philosophy. The so-called values such as wealth and pleasure have their place but this place is subordinate to the highest one which is liberation from the circle of birth and death.

It is precisely because the goal of Indian philosophy is the same as that of religion in India that there is a close alliance between the two. No matter what tradition one may follow, it is the quest for *mokṣa* that has kept Indian Philosophy and Religion related. The one has inspired the other right through the ages.

To doubt and investigate into the validity of a belief or religious doctrine was not considered a crime. Even revolutionary reformers have been assimilated partly or wholly into Indian spirituality. Thus it will be realised that the philosophical atmosphere in India was comparatively free of oppressive inhibitions and that religion not only did not interfere with the progress of independent thought but even welcomed it.

Although science with its adventurous spirit explores from the outside it too is now coming closer to the findings of philosophy, and thus, concluding, I said that although the problem cannot be easily solved by science the search for the 'one' can scarcely be forgotten, as Dr. Werner Heisenberg says.

It is this quest for the 'one' that made science an ally of the philosophy and religion in India. The significance of science is that it is the training-ground for the eventual journey into metaphysics.

Even for the performance of sacrifices enjoined in the Veda precision was called for. It was in this context that astronomy and mathematics as also architecture were established. The Vedic Indians knew how to express huge num-

bers without ambiguity and cumbersomeness. This was known as *parārdha*. That the earth is spherical in shape and that it remains suspended freely in the air, that it rotates on its own axis, that it has an orbital motion, that the motions are caused by the sun—these were facts known to the Vedic Indian.

In several schools of Philosophy, scientific concepts are made use of. The Atomism of the Vaiśeṣika has a value of its own even though it is a speculative theory and not a hypothesis based on experimental evidence.

The Śāṅkhya philosophy applies the principle of evolution and traces the universe with its multiplicity of physical objects and living organisms to a single source which it calles *Prakṛti*.

In Advaita, the metaphysics of non-duality, one may note the culmination of philosophy, Religion and science. The quint-essential teaching of the metaphysics is that Reality is one, not-two, that it is the supreme Self which transcends the distinction of subject and object, and that the world of plurality is an appearance. Quite a few top-ranking scientists seem to think that the Advaita view of the universe is not a fantasy, and that there may be truth in the 'doctrine' of non-duality.

What is true of Advaita in a special sense is true, generally, of Indian philosophy. It seeks for unity behind apparent diversity. Superficially, religion and science may seem to be in conflict. But in so far as they are human concerns and they touch the depths of being, they cannot be at war with each other. If properly understood science itself helps in the process of man's transcendence of his limitations.

We visited while at Mashad, some of the theological schools and also cultural centres.

(vi)

UNESCO Paris (1970)

I was invited by UNESCO to attend and participate in a Symposium on 'Education and Development of Man', in Paris, from 16th February to 20th 1970. As it was made clear by the Director General in his opening statement, the purpose of the Symposium was not to address itself to the methodological and quantitative problems of education, but rather to the aims—the what and the why—of education, *i.e.*, the qualitative aspects. 'In this sense, the basic question is not a change in techniques but in the very aims of education, in order to help produce different and better kind of man—what might be termed a new human model.' What I submitted was the following :

'*Let us not Hate Each Other*' was the title of my paper. I said that the principal participants in the process of education are the teacher and the pupil. The basic cause of the *malaise* that afflicts education all over the world today is the disaccord between teacher and pupil. The teacher has ceased to be the source of inspiration for the student ; and the student has little interest in study.

Politics is one of the contributory factors to this predicament. The leaders of political parties drag the students into the quagmire of political campaigning and often incite them to violent demonstrations.

The new educational technology which seeks to make the machine the instrument of good education is also responsible for the sorry state of affairs in education. Computerisation may help in the quantitative expansion of education ; it cannot improve the quality of education.

Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man. And so, the aim of education is not to develop the intellect alone, or to pour information into the student's

mind. The mind of the pupil is not an information-box, nor a memory-machine. Education should wholly dissociate itself from the mechanistic or behaviouristic view of the human person.

If the aim of education is the development of 'the good man' it is necessary to know : What is man? Man is essentially spirit, with mind, life and body as lower expressions. So the aim of education should be to enable the individual to discover the spirit (*puruṣa*) ; and this cannot be achieved so long as our educational objectives are limited and narrow.

Though education is a gradual and life-long process, the pupil receives the first and basic part of education only from his teacher. It is, therefore, necessary for the teacher to come to his own and resume his legitimate role as educator. All those connected with education should enable the right sort of teacher to emerge and do his work.

While in Paris, a Frenchman called at the Hotel where I was staying and announced himself as Vaśiṣṭha. This is the Indian name he has assumed because of his deep interest in Vedānta. He took me to various places of interest and to the group which is studying Vedānta with him.

Along with a few friends, I went to Gretz and visited the Rāmakṛṣṇa Vedānta Centre. The Head of the Centre was from South India. I had known him here in Madras before he went abroad. We spent a few peaceful hours at the Centre and the estate attached to it. The first to organise this Centre was Svāmī Siddheśvarānanda whom many disciples hold in veneration even after his passing away. One of his staunch disciples has taken on an Indian name Rakhāl, and he showed us the shrine in his house where he offers *pūjā* in the Indian fashion. We also visited the house of a professor who has been in India for some time and who was then interested in the study of the Ganges from its source to its merging with the ocean.

(*vii*)

World Conference for Religion and Peace (1970)

Dr. Homer A. Jack, an American and an admirer of the Gandhian way of non-violence, conceived the idea of convening a World Conference for Religion and Peace. Before he actually started working on this project, he made a global tour to meet prominent people interested in religion and to seek their help. He found very good response in Japan. The First Conference was organised in 1970 at Kyoto. Dr. Jack described it as a relatively new development in the shape of inter-religious dialogue for peace. The main interest of the conference was not a theoretical understanding of the wish of every religion for world peace, but how this wish could be translated into action to solve the different political and international conflicts. The Conference was held for six days from October 16th until 22nd 1970. The participants were invited to deal in depth, through three simultaneous work-shops with three themes which are continuing subject-areas for debate and action of the United Nations General Assembly : Disarmament, Development, Human Rights. It was felt by the organisers that leaders of world religions who are often noted for their rhetoric should turn their attention to firm political issues. Consequently, the Conference was conducted on the model of the U.N., discussions, debates, drawing up of resolutions, voting on them, and finally issuing the message of the Conference. The following is some of the affirmations made in the Conference Message to indicate the type of work accomplished by the participants in this Conference:

Conference Message :

1. The World Conference on Religion and Peace represents an historic attempt to bring together men and

women of all major religions to discuss the urgent issue of peace.

2. We meet at a crucial time. At this very moment we are faced by cruel and inhuman wars and by racial, social and economic violence. Man's continued existence on this planet is threatened with nuclear extinction. Never has there been such despair among men.

3. Our deep conviction that the religions of the world have a real and important service to render the cause of peace has brought us to Kyoto from the four corners of the earth. Bahai, Buddhist, Confucian, Christian, Hindu, Jain, Jew, Muslim, Shintoist, Sikh, Zoroastrian, and others—we have come together in peace out of a common concern for peace.

4. As we sat down together facing the overriding issues of peace we discovered that the things which unite us are more important than the things which divide us.

5. We found that we share a conviction of the fundamental unity of the human family and the equality, and the dignity of all human beings ; a sense of the sacredness of the individual person and his conscience; a sense of the value of human community ; a realisation that might is not right ; that human power is not self-sufficient and absolute ; a belief that love, compassion selflessness, and the force of inner truthfulness and of the spirit have ultimately greater power than hate, enmity and self-interest. A sense of obligation to stand on the side of the poor and the oppressed as against the rich and the oppressors. A profound hope that good will finally prevail.

6. Because of these convictions that we hold in common, we believe that a special charge has been given to all men and women of religion to be concerned with all their hearts and minds with peace and peace-making, to be servants of peace.

The Second Conference was held at Louvain, Belgium, from August 28th until September 1974. I went to Louvain

twice, once for the Preparatory Committee Meeting which was held earlier, and the scond time to participate in the World Conference. The proceedings of the Conference were on the same model as the Kyoto Conference. World problems with which the United National Organisation is seized were discussed in committees and commissions ; consultant experts were also invited to help the Commissions on topics such as disarmament, security, economic development and human liberation, human rights and fundamental freedom, environment and human survival, etc. Resolutions were passed and voted upon by the General Conference. At the end there was issued the Louvain Declaration on the same pattern as the Kyoto Message.

(viii)

Rothko Coloquium (1973)

The Menil Foundation set up in 1954, organised a Coloquium on '*Traditional Modes of Contemplation and Action*' at the Rothko Chapel, Houston, U.S.A., from July 22nd to 30th 1973. It was a religious meeting of scholars and leaders from both Eastern and Western faiths. The 'Houston Post' claimed that it was the first ecumenical meeting of its kind. The paper went on to say 'While in, no way a formal gathering designed at unifying the religions, it is instead a way of sharing differences, of exchanging knowledge of the great religions of the world.' I was invited to this Colloquium. I presented a paper on 'Vedāntic Meditation and Its Relation to Action'. It was a week of fruitful exchange of ideas and sharing of experiences.

Mrs. John de Menil was the chief organiser (her husband who was the moving spirit had died earlier). In her opening address she said, 'This is an exceptional assembly of men of God representing each a great multitude, an assembly

also of artists and poets, of writers and art-lovers, of men and women of good will.'

This is an account of the Houston Meeting as cited from a local paper :

'It is an unusual meeting to be held at any time anywhere. It is not ecumenical summitry in terms of a theological consensus or the meeting of religious organisations. It is rather an investigation into the mind and spirit of humankind as reflected by philosophers, theologians, mystics and humanists, a study of the growing force of the sacred in today's practical and endangered world.'

'The Rothko Chapel had been a unique meeting ground : Of no one faith, it is common to all. No one religion is host to the others. With this Colloquium, which was one of the compelling interests of the last years of John de Menil's life, the *raison d'* *être* of the chapel is being nobly served.

'Buddhism, Taoism, Sufism, Islam, Judaism, Christianity, the religious traditions of Africa and the American Indian, all form the background against which the scholars are holding their Colloquium, examining a thought, expanding an idea, comparing traditions of contemplation and action. In this strange time when man's life on this planet seems suddenly finite, when computer scientists are Cassandras of doom, an instinct tells us that somehow we must stretch mind and spirit to reach a new level of survival. The Rothko Chapel this week is the arena of search for a higher wisdom.'

While in Houston, we were taken on an escorted tour to NASA. Manned Space Craft Centre. We saw the Exhibit building, Mission Control Centre, etc. Another memorable visit was to a Texas Ranch where we spent half a day relaxing.

(ix)

World Hindu Conference, Madras (1976)

During the stay of His Holiness Jagadguru Śrī Jayendra Sarasvatī, the Śaṅkarācārya of Kāñcī Kāmakoṭi Pīṭham,

in Madras, he conceived the idea of convening a world Hindu Conference. There are large concentrations of Hindus not only in Asia but also in countries like Guyana and Mauritius. These Hindus constitute about one-third of the Hindu population in India. In the efflux of time, they have lost contact with the country of their forebears,and their own traditional religious practices and customs have become attenuated and distorted. His Holiness Śrī Jayendra Sarasvatī, realising the importance of keeping Hinduism alive in the countries beyond the seas, resolved to organise this Conference which was held from March 1st to 5th 1976.

It is needless to say that the Conference was a great success. The people of India came to realise that there are keen and earnest Hindus living in many foreign lands. The overseas Hindus who attended the Conference were able to understand that India, as it was the case in the centuries gone by, is eager to do all it can to promote the intellectual and spiritual welfare of people of Indian origin living abroad.

His Holiness was the motive force behind the Conference. He attended the Conference on all the five days and guided its deliberations with the wisdom and sagacity that always glows from the Pontiffs of the Kāñcī Kāmakoṭi Pīṭha. His own addresses every day provided a great source of inspiration.

On all the five days at the plenary sessions in the evenings the leaders who came from the different parts of the country as well as from abroad addressed the huge concourse of people. As Secretary of the Conference appointed by His Holiness, my task was made easy by the help rendered by a large number of young people devoted to the Kāñcī Maṭh. There were nearly sixty delegates and observers from countries like Malaysia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, South Africa and Mauritius.

Speaking on ' Hinduism and the concept of One World, '

I said, on one of the evenings, that paradoxically, while countries come closer to one another owing to science and technology, man has become more divided mentally and spiritually. I went on to say that politics or economics could never create 'one world' and that it is only when people understood that man in essence is the Self or Spirit that this ideal can be achieved, and that while Sages and Saints always seek the one-ness of the world, their followers emphasise differences.

(*x*)

Malaysia and Singapore (1976)

In 1976, from the 7th to 25th December the Malaysia Hindu Sangham celebrated its tenth anniversary. Along with this it sponsored the first meeting of the World Hindu Conference. I went to Kuala Lumpur, representing the World Hindu Council, and participated in the celebrations as well as the Council Meeting. Members from the following countries came : Besides Malaysia and India, there were delegates from Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Singapore, there was also an observer from Brunei.

The Malaysia Hindu Sangham had been doing wonderful work by training teachers of Hinduism. The celebrations were on a grand scale. There were public meetings, cultural programmes, visits to temples, etc. At the end of the Conference, those of the delegates who could spare the time were taken round the country. At important places, public meetings were arranged. The drive through the plantations was a unique experience. The area was spotted with small temples with quaint images of Hindu Gods and Goddesses.

The Secretary of the Branch of the Council in Singapore came and took me to that country for fulfilling a few public engagements. One of the memorable meetings which I addressed was in a Kāḷī temple and another was at the

Rāmakṛṣṇa Mission on Advaita. The British Professor of English Literature from Singapore University who presided over the meeting said, after listening to what Advaita was about, 'I never thought that Advaita is a Philosophy. My impression was that it was only a religion. After listening to your explanation in the speech, I see that it has a deep metaphysic'.

(*xi*)

World Conference on Religion, Philosophy and Culture, Madurai (1977)

His Holiness Jagadguru Śrī Jayendra Sarasvatī, Śaṅkarācārya of the Kāñcī Kāmakoṭi Pīṭham, desired that a World Conference on Religion, Philosophy and Culture should be organised at Madurai when he would be visiting that place and staying there for some days. The Conference was meant to be a meeting of World Religions. An Organising Committee was formed in Madurai to make arrangements for delegates and visitors. There were representatives from eighteen countries representing twelve religions. I was assigned the responsibility of writing to the invitees and to make them participate in this significant Conference. The countries represented were the following : Belgium, German Democratic Republic, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Nepal, Nigeria, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, Singapore, Thailand, Tibet, U.S.A., West Germany, Yugoslavia. And the religions represented were : Hinduism, Buddhism, and some of its later developments, Islam, Christianity and some of its later developments, Taoism, Yoruba, Jainism, Theosophy, Confucianism, Shintoism, Drusism, Sufism. It is significant to note that this was the first all-faiths Conference sponsored by a traditional Maṭh founded by Ādi Śaṅkara. The Conference met from March 30th to April 3rd 1977. In his speech at the Inaugural Session, His Holiness indicated

clearly the purpose of bringing together followers of different faiths : 'Although the religions today are different', he said, 'All of them have the same objective : *i.e.*, to teach man the means for gaining God's grace, and thereby living in happiness. The appearance of many religions is not for their mutual destruction. To suit the difference in time and place, the religions appeared in order to lead man to the same goal. It is by the grace of God that they appear so that men living in different conditions and under different circumstances may be helped. Therefore, the doctrines of religions should not be used for promoting religious strife. Letters and words are the expressions of God. They should not be, therefore, employed for purposes that are evil ; they should be made to serve the end that is good.'

His Majesty the King of Nepal came specially to Madurai for inaugurating the Conference along with Her Majesty the Queen. In the following passage he expressed, in a very succinct and lucid way, man's need for religion and the essential unity of all religions :

'Religion inspires us to move from evil to good, from darkness to light and to follow truth in place of falsehood. It elevates man from the morass of temporal concerns ; it ennobles his spirit with a sense of the sublime and, as its ultimate goal, it inspires man to achieve emancipation from all bondages. The relevance of religion to the modern world lies precisely in these pursuits. In peace and perplexity in pleasure and pain, religion has been the mainstay for man. The search has been through different dialects ; the Almighty has always been addressed to under different names but all great religions have held up similar ideals and values for man to cherish. Humility, peace, love and compassion are the values man has lost so often in the fires of hostility and greed, of hatred and selfishness. Great religions have the common goal of establishing peace

on earth ; great philosophies have always dispensed wisdom, and great cultures have always upheld peace and wisdom in everyday life.'

In my introductory speech, I explained how appropriate this Conference was as expressing the core truth proclaimed by Ādi Śaṅkara as Advaita. I pointed out that Śaṅkara came not to destroy but to reform and harmonise, to show the unity underlying diversity in approach to God-head and that in doing this he was following an ageless tradition giving it the luminous eminence it deserved, and which had been forgotten. I mentioned that his revered sixty eighth Successor, the Sage of Kāñcī and Guru of the present Head of the Kāmakoṭi Pīṭha, made harmony among spiritual paths one of his most predominant themes. Then I stressed that Hinduism has been misunderstood to be a polytheistic religion, yet this was not correct ; the recognition of the One in the variegated forms makes the Hindu respectful towards all religions.

I pointed out the auspiciousness of having this conference in Madurai which is the holy city of Goddess Mīnākṣī. It was at this place that the great Sage Ramaṇa Maharshi had worshipped and realised the highest truth before departing for Tiruvannāmalai.

Significantly this Conference is bringing together not only religious leaders but also representatives of culture, generally. This is in conformity with the message of Ādi Śaṅkara which is universal and applicable to any situation in life, and has been re-emphasised by the Sage his noble successor Śrī Candraśekharendra Sarasvatī the Teacher of the young Pontiff who believes that if some enlightened leaders in their own fields, be they politicians or scientists etc., understand that even science, with its discoveries, is coming nearer to the unifying truth, they will realise that we are all related and what happens to one affects the other. Even one's attitude towards the

enemy will be altered and this will help in bringing peace into our lives.

The Śaṅkarācārya who has inspired the conference has given the appropriate title to the theme that we should think about during these days which is ' The Goal of Man and How to Reach it '.

If we look at the goal, we shall understand that even the most primitive form of worship should be given due consideration, since it aspires to bring man ultimately to the Highest Value.

India has always respected the religious aspirations of others and has a tradition of offering hospitality to any who had to flee owing to religious persecution.

I concluded by expressing our gratitude and appreciation to His Holiness for his efforts to bring understanding and harmony by organising such a Conference and that his efforts had started even before this one, when he convened the World Hindu Conference thus harmonising the Hindus living in diverse places. I invoked the blessings of the Divine for a successful outcome of the Conference.

On all the days, right from the morning till late in the evening, people flooded to the Mahātmā Gandhi Stadium to listen to the various speakers. Everyday during the night there was some cultural programme. It was meant to be not only entertaining but also to be an expression of the philosophy and religion which it represented.

(*xii*)

A visit to Mauritius (1977)

I am going to report about a small Island-country where Hindus live. The country is known as Mauritius. It is so small that on ordinary maps of the world it is not shown at all. Mauritius is nearer to South Africa than it is to India

The contacts between Mauritius and India were for a long time cut off, as it were, and they are now being resumed. There are only two air-services a week from India to that country. Even air-mail takes a long time to reach there.

When the Government of India through the organisation which is known as the Indian Council for Cultural Relations asked me whether I would like to go there on a cultural mission, I accepted. So I went there on the invitation of some organisations in Mauritius, communicated through the Indian Embassy there and the Indian Council for Cultural Relations. It was on the 28th of April 1977 that I left Madras for Bombay and the Air India's plane for Mauritius left at 5.30 in the morning Indian Standard Time. Usually air-crew informs the passengers about interesting places on the way, although passengers may not be able to see them. The first announcement was that Mauritius was two thousand and nine-hundred miles from Bombay and that it would take five and a half hours to reach it.

I remember, in the good old days, when Indian Airlines and Air-India started operating, the pilot would from time to time use the microphone and inform them about the places they were flying over and so on, in order to keep the passengers in good spirits. For instance, if it was a flight from Madras to Delhi, at some point the pilot would say : 'We are flying over the Vindhyas' or 'To your right is Agra with the famous Taj Mahal' and so on. In an international flight the passengers would be told : 'We are now flying over Teheran' or 'Athens' or 'To your right are the Alps'. Now a days I find that this kind of entertaining the passengers is becoming less and less.

Now, from Bombay to Mauritius there is no landmark in between. The entire flight is over the Indian ocean. There is nothing interesting for the pilot to comment upon. Simply blindly, after five hours, the plane would gradually

come down and then there would be the announcement : 'In a few minutes we are about to land at the airport of Mauritius.'

When I arrived there, quite a number of people had come to receive me representing various organisations. The chief of them is a member of parliament. Mr. A. V. Chettiar. He had arranged the entire programme without even letting me know earlier. But everything was fixed in a fine sort of way. The first thing I noticed was that the flower-garlands were of beautiful colours but had almost no smell. It is the climate of the country that produces colourful flowers without any scent. We drove out of the airport, and it was a cross-country drive from South-West where the airport is and the North-West where Port Louis is located.

It is a small country, about forty miles each way. The island looks like a sort of square-oblong, if your like, with edges 'nibbled' off. The drive was a fine experience. I had never seen narrow roads tarred in such an admirable manner flanked by sugar-canes looking like wild bush. The principal crop of the country is the sugar-cane and therefore it is called Sugar-Island.

The day on which I arrived there, there were delegates arriving from different countries for a conference. It was the African Development Bank Conference. Many people had come, financiers and ministers, state-officials, all of them were arriving there. In the plane which I travelled by, two delegates, I think from India, also travelled with us. This Conference was being held in the auditorium of the Mahātmā Gandhi Institute. This Institute was set up some years ago and it is India that sponsors it. There is no other large auditorium to accommodate a world conference, and so the Mahātmā Gandhi Institute Auditorium was being used for this Conference also. As we were driving along we passed this Institute, the approaches to which were deco-

rated with festoons and flags. I was glad that I was not the only person at the time from abroad in the country, and that there were others also to whom attention would be given. They were there for quite a different purpose, for discussing banking and finance. I was there for the purpose of conveying to the people there some idea about the cultural heritage of the Mother Country.

My friends who were travelling with me in the car, gave me some information about the country. Usually I am reticent. I don't ask questions. But this time I had to ask because I had not read anything about Mauritius, and did not know anything about it. Four hundred years ago it was an unpopulated piece of land. There was no one living there. The Island was known to the Arabs and sea-pirates from the coast of Mahārāṣṭra, I was told, who used the Island for hiding their booties. For this reason the Island was called Treasure-Island at that time. But these people were birds of passage, they did not live there. Mauritius seems to be the result of a volcanic erruption. The soil consists of volcanic lava turned into stone and earth. There was no vegetation. It was thought to be uninhabitable. But some of the enterprising countries of Europe, when they wanted to come to India and to the Far East, found this Island in between.

The four European countries that came one after the other were the same that came to India and to other lands of the Far East : the Portuguese, the Dutch, the French and the British. The Portuguese came to Mauritius but they stayed there only for a short time. I was told that exactly a hundred years after Vasco da Gama came to Calicut, the first explorers arrived in Mauritius. The Portuguese were followed by the Dutch. The name Mauritius was given by the Dutch to the Island and the Dutch stayed there for about a hundred years. But, for some reason or other, at the end of this

period, they left the country. Some say it was because of the Arabs or disease-spreading pests ; one does not know why after one hundred years the Dutch should leave Mauritius. The French were the next to arrive. They called this land Isle of France. The name Mauritius was given up for the time being. From there, the French came to India, Pondicherry especially. They took with them workmen from Pondicherry to Mauritius to build their colonial offices and houses. Even now the seat of the Chief Executive of the Government is in a huge colonial building. It houses the Parliament and other Secretariats, etc. As we were driving along, the friends would point out to a huge Cathedral and say 'This Cathedral was built by masons from India, especially from Pondicherry.' The French had also made it possible for labour from South India to migrate, enter the country and work for the land. Sugar-cane was introduced and they found that anything sown there was growing plentifully without much attention. The sugar-cane which is their main export grows on rain-water. Almost all fruit-trees were introduced from India, I was told. So, as time went on, people mainly from India, were settled there as indentured labourers or in other positions and eventually people from North of India also had gone there for trade, for commerce and for labour. During the French period a vast majority of the citizens of Mauritius were of Indian origin. At first it was South Indians that were the dominant section. Gradually North Indians increased in their numbers. It is interesting to note that in Mauritius people from India were called by the name of the sea-port from which they emigrated. Calcutta became Calcoota in their language, so anyone who had came from that area in Bengal, Assam or Bihar would be called a Calcootan. And Indians from the Southern part of the country, especially Tamil Nadu, would be called Madrasis. I am told that there is a sea-port

or there used to be a sea-port in Andhra called Korangi, and Andhras were called by the name : Korangi, and Mahrattas from Bombay. It is curious to note but it is significant that so far as language is concerned a man wants to be as economical as possible by which I mean that he does not take sufficient care about the exactness of a name or how to spell or pronounce it properly. In other words, he tries to shorten it.

During my stay in Mauritius a person came to me, was introduced to me by my host as representing a news-weekly magazine called the 'Mauritius Times Weekly'. In this connection I must say that there is no English newspaper in Mauritius. The newspapers are all in French and I was told that this was the only weekly English magazine. Now, this person representing the magazine came to me and said : 'I want to interview you for my paper'. I asked what his name was. He said 'Napal'. I asked him how this name came into existence at all. We know Nepal but N-a-p-a-l, how is it correct and also how can a person be called Nepal ? He said he did not know. 'Probably' he said, 'My ancestors came from Nepal, and the first person, when asked, must have given out the place-name, and the French Officer who recorded it should have written it with an 'a' instead of 'e' and so everyone belonging to that family came to be called 'Napal'. You will find that most of the names of Indians are misspelt, awkwardly written and they jar on one's ears. This is because any words foreign to the colonial rulers in those days used to be grasped incorrectly and spelt abnoxiously. Of this we have plenty of experience. The 'reformed' spelling of Indian names came into existence only a few decades ago. Even in the British period we know how atrociously proper names used to be spelt. Mathura became Muttra. Ayodhya becomes Oudh and as for names of persons one can give any number of examples. Even

now some Tamils who live in Bangalore, especially in the contonment area, spelt their names in a very awful way. So, the Hindus who went to Mauritius learnt to write their names in a very peculiar manner. The name of the then Prime Minister for instance is a very fine one, it is Sir Sivasagar Ram Goolam. But how is Sivasagar spelt? As Seevosagur. So, almost all these names became metamorphosed, as it were, and any Indian visiting now will be wonder-struck when he hears most of these names spelt in a grotesque way. There are other communities living in the Island besides the Indians. Some of these who have made that Island their home have come from European countries for trade and so on. The Whites or Mixed Whites, African people, a few of them are there because the distance from Mauritius to the East African Coast is only about one-thousand miles and in between there are islands. The biggest of them is Madagascar. There are people of Chinese origin, and there are Muslims. This is a division which is not a logical one at all : The people of Mauritius are divided into Indians, Whites or Mixed Whites, Chinese and Muslims. 'Muslim' refers to religion, 'Chinese' to country, 'Indian' also to country, and Mixed Whites seem to belong to a mixture of two types of people. The flag of Mauritius consists of four colours. It will be found that all government buildings are draped in these four-coloured long pieces of cloth, first there is red and then blue, yellow and green. I was told : red stands for Indians, blue for Whites or Mixed Whites and yellow for Chinese, green for Muslims. Now, this is the composition of the population of the country. Even now people from India form the majority. That is why the Prime Ministership and all other important portfolios are held by people from India, of Indian origin. But what is happening today? On account of unfortunate political influence the Tamils with some exceptions, are beginning to say that they are not Hindus, that they

belong to what they call 'Tamil religion'. 'Only the North Indians are Hindus ; we are not Hindus'. This is the slogan of the citizens of Tamil origin, with the result that the majority of Hindus is becoming reduced. There may be some reasons for this, several in fact. One of them is the confusion between *Hindi* and *Hindu*, any one speaking Hindi is a Hindu, and any one who does not speak Hindi or speaks Tamil is not a Hindu ! This seems to be the logic.

When in 1968 the island got its independence from Britain, it was the Indians or Hindus who were in the majority. The second election was organised some time after that and the result was that the majority of the ruling party was considerably reduced. It was reduced because of the aforesaid confusion. I was told that most of the Tamils who emigrated from this country did so from the Māyūram area. A friend of mine said : 'You can easily know that most of these Tamils had gone there from Māyūram by the fact that when they address you for the first time in the morning, just as we say "Good Morning" or "How do you do" they say, "Enna, enna cheythi" '. This is an expression used in the Māyūram area. Most of the North Indians had gone there from Bihar, they are Biharis. Although many Tamils consider North Indians there as Hindi-speaking people, really most of them are not Hindi-speaking. They have their own Bihari language which they call Vraj Bhāshā.

For the average Hindu who lives there, religion comes in only occasionally when there is a festival. I found that, in Malaysia, it is different. In Malaysia, most Hindus before they go to their offices in the morning visit a temple and then go. But in Mauritius the temples are crowded only on festive occasions. And, there are two important festivals : one is Śivarātri and the other Chitrā Paurṇamī. Śivarātri, I was told, is observed universally on the island. I was taken to a place, an elevated place, where there is a lake called

Gangatalao; talao means a tank. They believe that Ganges-water has flown into the lake and therefore they hold it sacred. On the day of Śivarātri people from the different parts of the Island trek, go by foot to the tank, carry water back to their own place and perform the *abhiṣekam* to the *liṅgam* in the shrine of their particular locality. Some people start four days earlier, others who are nearer, one day. It depends on the distance. They keep vigil throughout the night. On the tank-bund there is a huge lecture-hall or Bhajan-hall. Three or four lakhs of people gather there on that day. This I could not see because Śivarātri did not fall in the period during which I was there. But fortunately, one Cavadee-festival I could see. It was on Chitra Paurṇamī Day. Cavadees are still being carried on festival occasions here in South India, but I have never seen such colourful Cavadees as in Mauritius. In fact one of the questions put to me by the interviewer and telecast, was about the Cavadees. 'Have you seen such a colourful Cavadee-festival anywhere in your country?' I had to confess 'No'. There were gorgeously colourfully decorated Cavadees. Some of them in the form of temple-towers with figures like peacocks perching and so on. It was really a marvellous sight ; I have heard about Cavadees in Malaysia and also in other places, but here there was much more colour attached to it than even in India. I will describe the Cavadee festival I saw on the Chitra Paurṇamī Day. There is a Muruga-temple on a hill. It is surrounded by the inevitable sugar-cane fields. One of my friends took me there in the morning. It had already become dense with crowds. At a small rivulet there, I saw streams of people donning their orange coloured dhoties. They discard their usual dress and wear the orange coloured dhoties, have a dip in the stream and the majority of them have small *alagus* (silver spears) pricked on their bodies mostly but they are all pricked symmetrically and according to a

perfect designs. Numerous *alagus* are picked on the backs arranged in rows, in perfect order and then they carry their Cavadees which are decorated with some milk or curd-pot tied to them. I saw one or two people, devotees, dragging a small car with hooks attached to their hips. Not only Hindus but others, also, Creoles-as they are called, who are Christians, and people of other communities as well come and carry the Cavadee. Participation is not only from the lower labour-classes but also from the higher middle classes and educated sections. In order to watch the Cavadees my friend took me to a house nearby. I asked the young man there, 'Have you taken the Cavadee at all?'—'Yes, yes,' he said, 'Two years ago I did carry a Cavadee on my shoulders'. So it is becoming a wide-spread custom there to take the Cavadees. My friend who took me there said : 'It will be a day-long process, so we can go in the middle, finish a few things, and come back.'

We know it is a custom of any section of people going out of India to other countries to build temples. Hinduism and the practise of Hinduism are so inextricably knit with the temple that anywhere in the world Hindus cannot live without them ; so the Tamils built temples. The temple I saw is the Mīnākṣī Temple. They call it Mīnākṣī-Chokkanātha Temple. It is the oldest temple there ; the other temples came afterwards. They want proper *pūjās* to be done in the temples. There are other shrines for Draupadī and Māriāmman and so on. I saw one temple dedicated to Kṛṣṇa. When North Indians, went there, they too built temples, mostly Śiva-temples. They call then 'Śivālas'. Here too again the linguistic economy has changed 'Śivālaya' into Śivāla.' They say : 'These are Śivālas (Śivālayas)'. It was strange for me to note that there is a Tamil Peoples' Federation and a Federation for North Indians called Sanātana Dharma Temples Federation. These Federations have been consti-

tuted because the government distributes funds to the temples through these Federations. The priests are well paid there, and the Catholic Priests are paid much more even. In fact, one of the Tamil friends was complaining that while the Catholic priests get enormous amounts, the Hindu priest does not get even one tenth of that salary. Another friend who was there was arguing with him ; I was simply watching. He said, ' Do you know how much training has gone into the making of a Catholic Priest ? He is a University Graduate, he has a Degree and so on ; he comes from Rome or from some other place, but your priest does not know any thing, he cannot even repeat the *mantras* properly and how can he be paid that much money ? '

These two temple-federations are existing there, one for the North Indian temples and the other for the Tamil temples. After the Cavadee procession near the Muruga Temple, we went to the Mīnākṣī Temple, as mentioned earlier. There also, there was this Cavadee festival but there were not so many as in the other place. There, I was told, Thaipūsam is the great festival. On the Thaipūsam day they have a long procession to the Mīnākṣī Temple. After the visit to the Mīnākṣī Temple, we went to the Parliament. I watched a debate and after that one of the Ministers gave me lunch in the Parliament restaurant. And then we returned to the old place near the Muruga Temple. Even then, the festival was not over. They were trekking their way with drums and so on. It was interesting to see, as the Cavadee was going, some one was reading from either the Thevāram or Tiruvācakam or Thirupugaḷ. I was told, it was all written in Roman script. They were reading these hymns as the Cavadees were being taken. So these are the predominant features of the religion that it practised in Mauritius : Temples and these few festivals. I was surprised to see that even to temples men go with suits on, invariably with pants and shirt

and one or two with bow-tie and the kind of lounge-suit we associate with European people. But in devotion there is nothing that can be decried and we cannot find fault with the devotees who are intensely god-turned in their attitude.

Some modern religious organisations are working there. I went to the Rāmakṛṣṇa Mission Centre and gave a lecture. They have recently built a shrine for Rāmakṛṣṇa. The Svāmī who was there when I went and saw him, I recognised as an old friend, because he used to take care of me in Delhi at the Rāmakṛṣṇa Āśrama whenever I used to go and stay there. And at such places both Tamils and Hindi-speaking people come and participate. At this particular Rāmakṛṣṇa Mission I spoke on Rāmakṛṣṇa-Vedānta. The Chinmayananda Mission is there too. The *brahmacārin*, a Mauritian who is in charge there, had been trained in India. He had come to see me in Madras. He invited me. The very next day, I went and spoke to the group there. There is a Centre of Divine Life Society; I gave a talk there too. The Svāmī of that Centre hails from Madras, Svāmī Venkateśānanda. But at that time, he was back in India, and so I could not meet him. But the devotees were very keen that I should go and speak there. These are some of the religious institutes in Mauritius.

It will be remembered that I went to Mauritius on a cultural mission. I was invited by the Television-unit to record two interviews : one in Tamil and the other in English. I spoke at the Mahātmā Gandhi Institute on the *Fundamentals of Indian Philosophy*. The First Lecture I gave at the Mahātmā Gandhi Institute; it was presided over by Sir Veeraswami Ringadoo, the Finance Minister. This was given the the first place in the Television programme that evening, even before the World African Banking Conference. I spoke also at the Teachers' Training College. Formerly

they used to send their students to England for getting qualified, now they are sending their young men and women more and more to India, either to Madras, Madurai or Delhi, mostly. This is not so much because of their Indian origin but because it now costs less here than in England. Many of them have gone back, some of them have had the B.A. degree in Tamil, and they have returned to propagate Tamil among the Tamil sections. I was surprised to note that even in the families they speak Creole and not Tamil. Many of them do not know Tamil at all. And yet *that* is probably the reason why they want to be so zealous about Tamil and there are Tamil organisations there. Thus I spoke at many of these places. The University is quite young, there are only three faculties or ' schools ' as they call them. These are: Agricultural Technology, Science and the Management or Economics and Commerce. They are just now producing graduates, B.A.'s and B.Sc.'s. There is not yet provision for the Masters Degree at the University so far as I know, and most teachers are not even B.A.'s. They have done their higher secondary certificate course. Now at this Teachers Training College I had to speak twice, first one talk and immediately thereafter the other, because they have no common hall which could accommodate all the students and teachers. So, they split the meeting into two. I did not want to repeat, therefore I told each group : ' You will learn what I spoke to the other group from a report you may get.' The main theme of my speeches was this: 'Indian Culture is one, you cannot divide it into Hindi and Tamil. Language cannot divide a culture nor can the particular area from which you came divide you culturally from those who come from the other areas. You may talk of Tamil culture if you want, similarly of Hindi culture or Bihari culture. But all these are expressions or versions of one and the same culture which we call Indian or even Hindu.' I spoke at several places

about the fundamentals of the Indian heritage, how it ought not to be destroyed, what the strength had been of Indian culture that was responsible for preserving it against heavy odds and how the present generation should not lose sight of that heritage which has come to them. This was my main theme. There was a two-day cultural festival which rounded off my stay there. The earlier day I spoke in Tamil. The last day I spoke in English. The earlier day I spoke in Tamil because it was a Tamil-culture festival and all the other speakers were speaking in Tamil. But then somebody expressed to me that if I had spoken in English, it would have been better from the stand-point of understanding. In fact the first day the wife of the Finance Minister who inaugurated the festival said to me : 'I could not understand your speech because it was in Tamil. It would have been better if you had spoken in English.' The next day when the Finance Minister himself was presiding, I spoke in English. The topic was set for me ; it was Śaiva Siddhānta. Most of the Tamils who are living abroad think that Śaiva Siddhānta is something unique, which is different from Hinduism in general. This I found out years ago, when I visited Śrī Laṅkā, then called Ceylon. I had been invited to speak at three places where meetings took place. I was warned then that I should not open my mouth about Vedānta or speak anything about it. 'Vedānta to the Tamils is abominable, they won't listen to it'. I had been warned by two Professors of Tamil who had gone along with me to take part in those celebrations at Śrī Laṅkā. 'If you speak about Śaṅkara, people will get furious, they will question you, they will cross-examine you and make you miserable.' This was what they said. One of the Professors was also of that attitude and mentality. He said to me : 'Śaiva Siddhānta is the only religion that will be welcome here ; if you talk of Vedānta or Śaṅkara you will be in for trouble.' There in Śrī Laṅkā even today Hinduism is refer-

red to as Śaivism. Instead of Hindu they say Śaiva, and in all the schools religion is taught as a compulsory subject for examinations. In the Tamil schools the books on Hinduism are all called Śaiva Samaya texts. So it is Śaiva Samaya that is Hinduism there. So, I knew that this was the 'Śrī Laṅkā-Way' or the 'Tamil-way' from Śrī Laṅkā. In Mauritius, I agreed to speak on Śaiva Siddhānta, I spoke for more than an hour on the fundamentals of Śaivism, but at the end, brought in Śaṅkara. I said, 'Without Śaṅkara, there could be no Śaivism today and that soul-moving hymns to Śiva have been sung by Śaṅkara'. I cited a few verses from the *Sivānanda-laharī* wherein he gives an eye-witness account of Kailāsa. He gives a glorious and glowing description of Śiva seated on His mount, the sacred bull, and surrounded by devotees singing his praise and dancing with joy. Then I told them how the various stages in liberation recognised in Śaiva Siddhānta are all mentioned in a verse in *Sivānanda-laharī*.

This was my last public lecture in Mauritius. The next day, I left the island with some little satisfaction that I had done my duty to the best of my ability as a messenger from this ancient land to that small, tiny island called Mauritius.

On our return-journey soon after leaving the airport, the captain announced, 'In about two and half hours from now we shall be crossing the Equator.' The pilot came along and greeted me as he sat next to my seat. 'Are you so and so?' He asked and he asked further whether I was comfortable, whether I felt that the flight was smooth. I asked him how he came to know about me. He said that he had seen me on television in Mauritius and, with kind courtesy, expressed pleasure at meeting me. He invited me to the pilots' cabin. 'Would you come and sit with me in the cockpit'? I agreed to do so. It was the first time I was invited by the pilot of an

airplane to visit the cabin. I was sitting behind him in the chair. He was watching the weather through some instruments that were fixed there.

I mentioned earlier that Mauritius is called Sugar Island. They also call it Emerald Island because for a distance of about one mile it is surrounded by coral-reefs. Waves do not splash against the shore. There is a sort of lagoon all around and therefore it has become a place of tourist-attraction. They have plenty of money and the standard of living is rather high for a small island. You can become prosperous there, but my wish is that the split that has come among the Hindus should be removed. There should be more and more people going to Mauritius to cement the various sections who, on account of wrong propaganda, are going apart.

Post-Script

This Post-Script is being written on August 24th 1981, when I have completed seventy years of earthly existence. My only aim in writing this book is to help fellow-travellers to the Ultimate Reality.

In a recent contribution to a series of Volumes published by Professor André Mercier and Maja Svilar under the auspices of Federation Internationale des Societées de Philosophie, '*Philosophers on their Own Work*' I have written on the theme 'My Commitment to Advaita'. I cannot better conclude the account of my story than by quoting the opening and concluding passages of that article :

'Advaita, to the exposition of which I have dedicated my entire life, is not a school of philosophy, nor can it be limited by what we now-a-days call "philosophy". Advaita is a symbolic name for the principle of non-duality.'

'That realisation of the principle of non-duality is possible may be doubted by the mind unaccustomed to this manner of thinking. Here again I can only refer to those who have actually entered into this experience, such as the late Ramaṇa Maharshi mentioned earlier and the living Sage who happens to be a Pontiff of Hindu monkhood, bearing the title Śaṅkarācārya of Kāñcī, who has also been referred

to, both are contemporary witnesses to the experience of the non-dual truth, of unity which goes by the name of Advaita.'

'To the understanding and exposition of this experience which is the culmination of all inquiry and research, I have offered all my attention, be it academic, human or spiritual. It is that which sustains me.'

The Author

A CHANNEL FOR THE BLESSINGS OF THE SAGES OF ARUNACHALA AND KANCHI

Queen Frederica of Greece

I am proud to know Professor Mahadevan. Not only India but the whole world is richer because of his example. He testifies to the truth which is Advaita. The Blessings of such enlightened souls as Ramana Maharshi and His Holiness the Sankaracharya of Kanchi flow through him and together with his own enrich us all.

A GENUINE ADVAITIN

Eliot Deutsch, Professor of Philosophy, Editor of Philosophy East and West, Hawaii.

Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan has always impressed me by his profundity as an academic leader and his humility as a genuine Advaitin.

A DISTINGUISHED SCHOLAR

H. D. Lewis, Professor of Philosophy, University of London.

Professor Mahadevan holds a distinguished position in a line of notable scholars who have interpreted the culture and philosophy of India, not only to their own people, but also to scholars in other parts of the world. This requires a rare combination of gifts and attainments. These include having close scholarly familiarity with philosophical and other writings of India and also a sensitive appreciation of the course of Western Philosophy. In addition there is required a critical detachment in the presentation of the ideas to which one is partial oneself and in which ones own personal commitments and loyalties are deeply involved. All these things Professor Mahadevan has attained in a high degree. The tribute paid to him many years ago by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan in the foreword to Professor Mahadevan's book *The Philosophy of Advaita*, has been amply fulfilled in the subsequent list of books by Mahadevan and by the influence which he has exercised on the study of philosophy in India in the ensuing years.